. Theatrical— 1921.

. Individual Troupes.

BALTIMORE MD. MORN. SUN
JUNE 28, 1921

NEGRO OPERETTA AT LYRIC

Smarter Set Company Opens Run In "Bamboula."

The Smarter Set, co-starring Salem Tutt Whitney and J. Homer Tutt, colored comedians, is presenting what is called "a new and sensational jazzonian operetta entitled 'Bamboula,' this week at the Lyric. The music is bright and the comedy good.

The operetta concerns the attempt of a musical fanatic to trace the origin of Bamboula, an ancient melody, to prove that Africa has contributed to the music of the world. The play winds back through the paths of jazz to Ethiopia where the professor tracks the elusive tune to its lair.

Royal Southern Singers Quartette

Chicago Defender 9/13/21

Famous organization of American vocalists, who, with Miss Abbie Mitchell as soloist, are creating a great sensation in Europe. They close a three weeks' engagement at Follies Marigny Theater, Paris, France, on Saturday, August 13.

NEGRO GRAND OPERA COMPANY ORGANIZED

N. Y. CITY MUSICAL AMERICA
SEPTEMBER 3, 1921

New Yorkers Back Enterprise—Opening Presentation in October

A Negro Grand Opera Company has been organized by prominent Negro musicians and patrons of music in New York to further the artistic development of the race and to provide music of a high class for Negroes of this country. The enterprise marks the fulfilment of the ambition of H. Laurence Freeman, Negro musician and composer, who has long worked to aid the artistic advancement of his race. He will be the director of the company, and will conduct the orchestra.

A company of one hundred has already been assembled, and rehearsals have been inaugurated. The first presentation will be made in October in a Broadway playhouse, it is announced. Mr. Freeman, who has had long experience as a conductor and as an organizer of choruses, claims to have discovered fine operatic material during his travels over the country. Many musicians of high talent have only been awaiting an opportunity to display their ability, he declares.

While engaged in musical activities in various Negro communities, Mr. Freeman has accomplished several works based upon the life of the race in which his company will be seen. He has composed the librettos and music of eight operas which portray unusual aspects of Negro life in the United States and Africa. Mr. Freeman has been working in this direction since 1898, and is the pioneer in the project of producing operatic works for the Negro. He is hopeful that the venture will be welcomed and that it will be regarded as a serious departure.

In speaking of the Negro in music and art, Mr. Williams recalled that several years ago the Williams and Walker Company had a long and successful run on Broadway.

One of the artists engaged for leading rôles with the company is Edward Stello, who has appeared in "Chu Chin Chow," and who is now rehearsing for the first performance of the Negro opera. The company is capitalized at $50,000, and has opened offices on 139th Street, in the heart of the Negro district.

CLEVELAND G. ALLEN.

. Theatrical – 1921.

Troupes, Individual

Bert Williams To Be Starred

New York, March 10.—A. H. Woods has signed a three-year contract with Bert Williams, who is now appearing on the road in "Broadway Beauties." Mr. Woods will present the comedian in a new musical play called "The Pink Slips" by Walker De Leon at one of Mr. Woods' theatres next season.

Theatrical Corporation to Develop and Promote Colored Talent

NEW YORK, Aug. 9, 1921—Papers were filed today for the incorporation of the Ethiopian Amusement Corporation, a $300,000 enterprise, to be devoted exclusively to the development, management and production of entertainments with all colored talent for the stage, screen and musical arts.

The offices of the company are located in the Putnam Building, Suite 505, 1493 Broadway, New York City, and the plans, as outlined in the papers of incorporation, cover the entire field of entertainment from building, leasing and operating theatres, to establishing a school, with branches in all the larger cities, for the purpose of teaching, professionally, elocution, dancing, singing and music.

The incorporators are successful theatrical men of long experience, and it is their belief that colored stage talent, properly taught and developed adequately equipped, and honestly managed, offers a field for profitable investment heretofore unappreciated.

The individual colored artist has, in the past, had to struggle against tremendous odds and many artists of exceptional ability, have given up the battle rather than condemn themselves to the uncertainties of eking out a livelihood in the smallest and cheapest theatres.

FROM $20 PER WEEK TO $1000 EVERY NIGHT

The Afro-American 9/30/21

This Is What Happened To Mamie Smith In Short Space Of Three Years

NOT SPOILED BY WEALTH

At Home Chatting With Afro Reporter Or Driving $11,000

By Wm E. Ready

Some three years ago, Mamie Smith, jazz artist, appeared at the old Regent Theatre an entire week for the munificent sum of $20.00, or $3.33and a third cents per night.

On last Tuesday, the said Mamie Smith began a three-days engagement at the newly enlarged theatre of the same name, and under same management at the slightly increased sum of $1,000 per night.

Mamie Smith is a shining exampel of the "tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood lead on to fortune." There were jazz singers making records long before Mamie Smith entered the field. There are jazz singers making records today, but there is only one Mamie Smith.

But there was something that these singers lacked in interpretation, call it "the human appeal" call it racial affinity; call it what you will--for our own part, we prefer to call it "soul." Certainly it cannot be called superior voice equipment, for there are numbers of them whose voice was the equal and in some cases superior to hers, what ever it was Mamie Smith had it, and knew she had it, and did not fear to use it, with the result that she is today America's undisputed "Queen of Jazz."

But the famous jazz singer has not been spoiled by her meteoric rise to her present commanding position. When the writer sought her out after her first performance on Tuesday evening he was welcomed into her small dressing-room up among the "flies" of the Regent stage with the unaffected graciousness that might have been expected only in the quiet confines of the reception-room of her own home.

Contrary to reports, Miss Smith, who in private life is Mrs. Ossey Wilson, is not a Baltimorean but a native of St. Louis. When this claim was mentioned to the singer, she laughingly replied that "every city in the country had laid claim to being her birthplace."

During the interview a stalwart bronzed gentleman wearing kahki overalls came up and was introduced as Mr. Wilson the Madam's husband and business manager, he also was introduced to another of the singer's constant companions "Jazz Baby" a cunning tiny snow white toy poodle. She admitted that her chief recreation is driving her $11,000 car. Recently in Norfolk, Va., she played in Billy Sunday's Tabernacle one night to $11,000.

From Baltimore she goes to New York. After Christmas she and her "Jazz Hounds" will sail for Europe for an extended tour.

Theatrical – 1921.

Troupes, Individual.

THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE COLORED ACTOR AS AN ENTERTAINER

Afro-American 2/19/21

Never before in the history of the native stage has the merit of the colored actor received from both the theatre manager and the theatregoer alike, the consideration as an entertainer that he is receiving today. Especially is this true in regard to the manager and theatregoer of the opposite race.

Notwithstanding the fact that some of the more liberal-minded of that very small number composing the group of native intelligentsia of that race have for years been proclaiming that the artistic future of America depends upon the superior artistic ability dormant in the Negro race, the greater mass of citizens have scoffed at the idea of any such superior ability. Only in the case of one of the Seven Arts—that of music—has the Negro's endeavours hitherto been sufficiently authoritatives to completely disarm these scoffers.

The present theatrical season however, has seen the Negro actor swing into an artistic stride as a performer that cannot but help engage the serious attention of everyone interested in the theatre, from manager to playgoer. Not only in vaudeville and burlesque in the case of the better class of white houses, have we noted this recognition, but the present season has seen what the leading theatrical critics of the country are agreed is the season's greatest drama, presented on Broadway with a Negro actor playing the leading role; and playing it in such a manner that these same critics were quite as unanimous in declaring it the greatest acting likewise seen in New York this season. In addition to this several big productions are scheduled for the near future, under the sponsorship of whit management, with colored stars forming the cast of performers. The day of recognition of the colored performer as an artist and box-office asset has truly arrived. We bid him godspeed.

Honorable Charles W. Anderson and Edward C. Brown, General Manager of the Quality Amusement Corporation, Make Speeches on the Return of the Drama at the Country's Best Playhouse

New York, News 3/3/21

"Matinee Idol" Walker Thompson and Notable Cast in One of the Best Plays We Have Had at the Palatial Lafayette in Some Time — "Nothing But the Truth" Lives Up to All Said in Advance and Is an Unusually Attractive Show

Edward C. Brown, general manager of the Quality Amusement Corporation, came from Philadelphia on Monday to be present at the opening show by the Lafayette Players at the Lafayette Theatre on Monday night and after noticing the enthusiastic manner in which the first offering was received, announced that he was satisfied to again give Harlem the opportunity to say whether the drama is wanted or not.

After the first act of the show the Honorable Charles W. Anderson came before the footlights to inaroduce Mr. Brown to the audience, and in his inimitable style entertained the audience for a few minutes by personal anecdotes touching on his appreciation of the efforts of his people before the footlights. He also paid a glowing tribute to Charles Gilpin, and before concluding voiced the hope that the support of the community would be given to such a worthy object as that fathered by the Quality Amusement Corporation.

Mr. Brown, in speaking to those assembled to witness the return of the Lafayette Players, said in no uncertain terms that while he was proud of the opportunity to serve his race along the lines of dramatic endeavor, he could very well continue to run the Lafayette at a loss a sit was not a philanthropic but a business venture. As a successful banker he also said that one of the things he learnt early in his career was not to hold on to a losing proposition.

It is the intention of Mr. Brown to secure the best along dramatic lines for Harlem, and if he adheres to this policy of the best and nothing but the best, he can rest assured that Harlem will gladly patronize the Lafayette Theatre. Of engaging personality, it is the opinion of scores of New Yorkers that closer contact with things theatrical in the community would spell success for Mr. Brown and his associates.

Of the play it is gratifying to be able to say that it is the kind of farce-comedy that in the old days drew thousands to the Lafayeete. Walker Thompson has been cast in what we now look upon as a real Thompson role, and that he gets all that he can out of it is seen in the manner the people receives his work. Evelyn Ellis has returned to us as charming as ever, and in her work is seen the high standard that won her a host of admirers in days not very long ago.

In fact, looking over the cast, it is hard to single out every individual for paticular mention as they are all working as a perfect unit and appearing at their best. Townsend, who has been away from the Lafayette Players for a long time, brings back memories of the days when he scored that remarkable hit as "Jimmy" in one of the big plays rought to Harlem, and if Mr. Brown is desirous of making a quick and sure fire hit with Harlem he would do well to bring back this play which will give another artist a chance to show our people that there are roles made to fit more than one of the Players.

Isabelle Jackson, J. Francis Mores Barrington Carter, Lionel Monagas Elizabeth Williams, Harry Plater and Isabelle Francesco all add their bits towards making "Nothing But the Truth" one of the most enjoyable vehicles selected for the entertainment of patrons of the most palatial theatre catering exclusively to colored people in America.

THE BLACK THESPIAN ON BROADWAY

New York Sun 3/7/21

Gratifying indeed is the prospect of the arrival during the coming season of a large number of colored performers on the legitimate stage to Broadway. This is not only a tribute to theh sterling, intrinsic character of the colored performer, but an omen of a more enlightened and considerate public sentiment toward colored people. The goal of every actor's ambition—Broadway—is not reached by a Caucasian by luck or sudden flight, but by dint of struggle and sacrifice, coupled with and directing true worth and ability. The black actor or actress who reaches this acme of the talented profession does so under the double handicap of the color line and the charmed circle. Even on the variety, vaudeville, circuits the number of colored performers on the modern stage has been limited who have broken through the barriers to earn the fame and fortune of the great white, but even in that role the names of "Billy Kersands," Sam Lucas, Ernest Hogan, Bert Williams, Aida Walker, Avery and Hart, Mitchell and Cook, the Moseleys, Sam Dudley and others like Moss and Frye, Dotson, Sweatman, Fiddler and Shelton, Bojangle and a few others hardly less conspicuous, have shown lustrous. But on the fingers of one hand can be counted the legitimate black shows on the Great White Way and their number almost ends with the wonderful Williams and Walker shows and the "classy" production of Cole and Johnson. Never until last season did black men cast in roles purely histrionic come into their own on the "main street" in this nation's metropolis when the masterful Charles Gilpin made his epoch-making debut in "Emperor Jones' and Barrington Carter capably essayed the leading role in the ill fated "Goat Alley." But save for the indispensable great comedian Bert Williams and the numerous cabaret entertainers, of quartets quintets and jazz bands made popular and possible through the initiative and genius of the lamented Lieutenant James Reese Europe Broadway for almost a decade now has been unknown to the colored comedian.

Now the black Thespian is going back to Broadway not as single spies, but in troops and battalions, and there is real reason for rejoicing. The inimitable Bert Williams is soon to open and star there in "The Pink Slip" and one of the great comedians of the ages will come into his own. "Shuffle Along" with Sissle and Blake and Lottie Gee and the rest of their syncopated circle has ushered the colored musical comedy into the good graces of "Dear Old Broadway," and so long as those that come after maintain their high standard of melody, terpsichore and deportment their number will grow and prosper to the advancement of the profession and the advantage of the race. Irving Miller in "Put and Take" and a new all colored musical diversion by Creamer and Layton are scheduled soon to take their equal places alongside "Shuffle Along."

Colored comedians maintaining the class and deportment of all these are credits to the race and we say more power to them. They are harbingers of racial good will. They are as truly workers in the vineyard of race progress as the artisan, merchant or politician. They are pioneers in the natural race profession not only of mimicry but of acting, whose great predecessor was the tragedian, Ira Aldridge, and whose successors in the not distant future will claim front rank among those who will make the world laugh, cry and think. The black Thespian on Broadway is one healthy sign of a more hopeful future fo the race.

E. C. BROWN WRITES

Defender 7/30/21

A fine letter arrived a few days ago, sent in by E. C. Brown, president and general manager of the Quality Amusement Corporation, under whose direction the Lafayette Players are. In it the writer gives a detailed account of the present day situation, as far as the drama is concerned. That the operations of the corporation will be confined to the Eastern field was made manifest with the withdrawal of the group which had held forth at the Avenue theater for some time. Bad business, coupled with unsatisfactory conditions of another sort caused the move, according to the letter.

New Houses

"We are going ahead with our theater in Baltimore and hope to have it completed by fall. As soon as this occurs we will put up a theater on the order of the Dunbar in either Pittsburg or Chicago. We believe that Chicago is a great field, our late experiences at the Avenue notwithstanding. In regards to your recent statement referring to the Dunbar, will say that you were in error, as that house is doing a capacity business in drama; more business, I believe, than any Race theater in the United States.

Lafayette Sagging

"The Lafayette at New York is not doing so well, but we hope to bring it back. Every effort to get together the best of the Race's artists, regardless of expense, will be made. We will be qualified to present the strongest plays written and expect to renew the interest of the people in the Metropolis to this higher class of entertainment. We intend moving the headquarters of the Quality Amusement Corporation to Philadelphia on May 1, and you will hear from us along that line as soon as the transfer is made."

Big Concern

There are but few of the readers of this section who are aware of the fact that the Quality Amusement Corporation is a part of a group of enterprises which comprises the biggest and most influential theatrical interests controlled by our people. In addition to the above mentioned there are the Elite Amusement, Dunbar Amusement and Douglass Amusement Corporations, owning and controlling theaters in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Norfolk and Newport News, with additional houses in other cities contemplated. Over $3,000,000 of available cash is involved. The Dunbar theater at Philadelphia alone is valued at close to half a million dollars, being situated on Broad street in the heart of the Quakertown's "Rialto." Notices of the doings of the Quality Corporation will appear in this section from time to time. Watch for them.

ANITA BUSH

Billboard 8/6/21

The first colored person to present a Negro dramatic company in New York. The offering was "The Girl at the Fort." Charles S. Gilpin was in the cast.

HOMER TUTT AND SALEM TUTT WHITNEY

Billboard 8/6/21

Messrs. Tutt and Whitney are the owners and stars of the well-known "Smarter Set."

Theatrical - 1921.

Troupes, Individual.

THE BUSINESS END

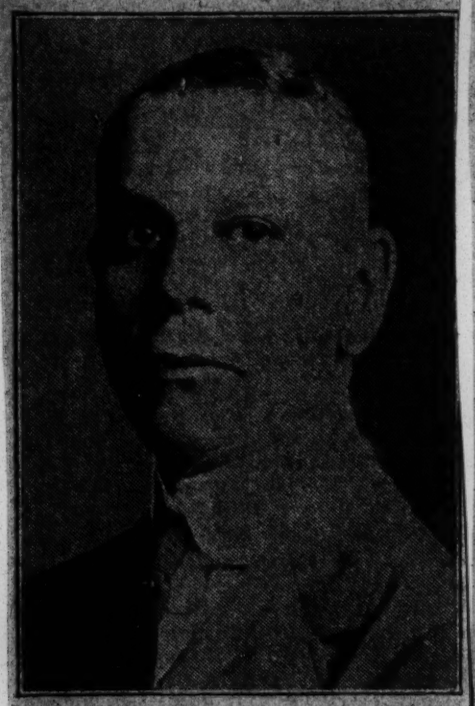
Billboard 8/6/21

Of the Negro Phase of Theatricals—T O. B. A. the Big Syndicate

Organized handling of theaters and acts and the routing of companies that purvey amuse ment to the colored public is farther advanced than is generally known to the layman or th profession at large.

The largest single unit in this business i the Theater Owners' Booking Association, o

C. H. TURPIN



Vice-president of the Theater Owners' Booking Association and owner of the Booker T. Washington Theater, St. Louis, Mo.

which Milton B. Starr, owner of the Bijou Theater, Nashville, is the President.

This circuit controls the attractions playing 80 of the 107 theaters devoted to colored road shows and vaudeville. More than 50 companies travel over the circuit, and 179 vaudeville acts find almost continuous work with the association.

The operations of the circuit extend from Philadelphia in the East, Detroit in the North, Tampa, Fla., Southeast, to San Antonio, Tex., in the West. Their houses grace the cities of 19 States.

The greatest, and, to the writer's mind, the most significant feature of the enterprise, is its demonstration of the fact that white and black men of responsibility can work together in harmony and without the much-talked-of friction so often declared to be inevitable when members of the two races are brought together. The circuit also disproves that business relationship has necessarily any bearing on social admixture. These men have worked together to build up an immense business fabric, yet each remains loyal to his own environment and preferences in his period of relaxation.

C. H. Turpin, St. Louis, is the vice president; W. S. Scales of Winston-Salem, N. C., is secretary and Sam E. Reevin of Chatta- treasurer.

Other directors are H. J. Hury of Birmingham, Ala.; E. S. Stone of Indianapolis, Ind.; Chas. P. Bailey of Atlanta, Ga., and Clarence Bennett.

S. H. Dudley, who personally controls a dozen theaters in Washington, D. C., and vicinity, is the Eastern manager.

Short jumps, economy of operations and steady employment are the methods employed by the association to insure satisfactory service to both houses and companies.

As an evidence of good faith to the colored actor, the official representatives of the association have lent very great encouragement and a spirit of co-operation to the Colored Actors' Union, an organization of artists of the race that functions pretty much as does the larger and better known "Four A's."

The next largest institution among us is the All-Negro, owned by the Quality Amusement Company, with its Lafayette Theater in New York, the $400,000 Dunbar in Philadelphia, the $250,000 Attucks in Norfolk, the $500,000 Douglast under construction in Baltimore, the equally costly Howard in Washington, D. C., and with booking contracts with the Pershing in Pittsburg and two smaller houses in the Tidewater district of Virginia.

The ownership of these houses rests with local corporations, as in the case of the Attucks, Norfolk, of which Robert Cross is manager, and the Howard, Washington, owned by the Thomas Bros. Yet they are all Negro and work in close harmony, presenting drama and the bigger road shows of the race.

Murray Bros.' combination of several picture houses, concert hall, newspaper plant for general printing and motion picture exchange is an illustration of diversified interests capably handled.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams' chain of four theaters in Oklahoma cities is a quarter of a million dollars' worth of proof of what good team work in the family may accomplish.

The greatest individual achievement attained is the remarkable success of the Standard Theater of Philadelphia which John T. Gibson built up from abandoned darkness seven years ago to one of the biggest money-earning vaudeville houses in the country. Mr. Gibson, a few years since but a petty wage worker, is today rated at close to a million. He, too, credits friend wife with being a most practical business associate.

Chas. Turpin, of St. Louis, has a following at the Booker T. Washington Theater that assures an income the tax upon which would provide a satisfactory income to many.

In Dallas, Tex., Mr. Chints Moore has established such a reputation for theatrical sagacity and is of such financial responsibility as to prompt immediate consideration wherever Negro theatricals are discussed.

The foregoing are but the cream of a large group of Negroes who have demonstrated their mastery of the complications of the front office.

On the road are others with successful histories. Leon Long books five shows and travels ahead of one of his attractions. Louis Schooler has traveled ahead of almost every sort of attraction—concert bands, baseball teams, lecturers and theatrical enterprises. He has worked for, with and against white advance representatives and made good.

Eph Williams and Mr. Purgsley have established reputations for being real showmen by year after year, turning over a profit with the Silas Green Company.

A Tennessee minister, were he alive to appreciate the fact, would be proud of his three boys; Quintard Miller, owner and manager of a musical comedy company of 35 people; Irving Miller, who plays two such shows that are his property, and Florency Miller, who is a stockholder in the NiKKo Producing Company, owners of the big Broadway show, "Shuffle Along," as well as being a co-author and a co-star of the attraction.

The 50 shows operating over the T. O. B. A. are practically all owned and managed by colored men, with some exceptions such as the Ollie Burgoyne Company and one of the Bob Russel shows. The former is managed as the name indicates and the latter by the very capable Mrs. Bob. House. Managers have long since acquired respect for both of these and for one or two other lady managers.

Mutual assistance and social improvement have their place in the profession. In addition to the Colored Actors' Union we find in Chicago the Colored Theatrical and Professional Club with a membership of more than 300. That veteran character actor, Chas. Moore, is president. Tom Lemonier, the famed composer of "Just One Word of Consolation" and other successes, is the secretary.

Jesse Shipp, an old stage producer, is the presiding officer of the Dressing Room Club of New York. A. G. Brooks is the secretary, with a roll of 200 artists on his books.

"Bob" Slater is the president of the Colored Vaudeville Beneficial Association of New York, with a membership that includes about 200 big and small time acts. While of the type of such organizations as the Friars, Lambs and Green Room Clubs, they are, of course, less wealthy, and are distinctly racial in character, with a friendly rivalry that is so moderate as to permit of the exchange of courtesies, one with the other.

FOREWORD

Some Figures and Facts About the Negro

Billboard 8/4/21

The remarkable disclosures concerning Negro interests in the amusements of the nation, while surprising to most of us, should not be so, if we but bear in mind the economic condition of the race.

Census reports indicate that about eleven million, or about one-tenth of the population of the country are of the so-called colored group. Their wage earners have an enormous annual turnover.

The race in the aggregate owns over 72 billions in property. This includes 920,976 farms, and farms constitute the basic wealth of the nation. The per capita savings deposits of the race is $80.85.

They own and operate over fifty banking institutions and more than a hundred insurance companies.

One of the latter, the Standard Life of Atlanta, Ga., has assets of more than a million dollars. The North Carolina Mutual is about the same sized concern. The Southern Aid Society of Virginia has set an example in assisting to finance theatrical construction. The Brown & Stevens Bank of Philadelphia has underwritten several millions of theater projects. The New York Association of Trade and Commerce and the Baltimore Negro Business Men's Exchange are types of advanced business organizations.

Among these people are more than 700 real estate concerns, some quite small but others of the size of the Standard Realty and Loan of Atlanta, Ga., with nearly two million in loans outstanding on good properties, or the more metropolitan Nail & Parker, in New York, who handle a half million monthly on conservative lines.

There are more than 120,000 Negro tradesmen in either retail or wholesale business. Chicago alone has 1,522 business enterprises owned by Negroes. These are but specimens of the national survey.

madrid, atlanta, ga. Perhaps we can simplify by discussing the principle. First the story, the scenario, camera technique, director, action, actors, interior and exterior atmosphere, together with elasticity of funds.

The story must be clean, entertaining, devoid of odorous propaganda and above all a Negro tale, with Negro heroes and heroines in a natural atmosphere.

Apart from the story, is the scenario or continuity. The sequence of the scenes must be natural, easy to follow, allowing the theme to flow in one continuous stream so that the most ordinary patron can enjoy the author's intention without straining the imagination, or with pain await the arrival of poorly written titles to explain the action. Short, snappy titles with carefully studied sequence are a guarantee that the continuity is par excellence.

In speaking of the camera technique; it will surprise a great many producers to know that the colored artist is the best screen type obtainable; the darker the skin tone the greater the objective; hence, in the photograph when finished instead of a ghostly white against a dark background, you will have delightful studies in all shades blending harmoniously [illegible] black to [illegible]

Listed in this issue are more than a hundred theaters owned by members of the race and 116 owned by whites catering to the race. Nine of the latter are managed by Negroes. A movie company claims to own a list of 600 that use Negro pictures.

One hundred and fifty-six picture houses are listed along with 104 playing vaudeville and drama, or road shows. Twenty-two more are equipped for shows and at present playing only pictures. The 26 States in which these houses are located have a Negro population of more than nine million. It is easy to see that much of the field remains to be developed by purveyors of amusement.

There are on the road or in stock fifty organized companies of Negroes in musical comedy, six dramatic companies and a dozen minstrels. They are listed on another page.

PROMINENT IN MOTION PICTURE FIELD

Left to right: (1) Clarence E. Muse, director of the Del Sarte Film Co., and a former member of the Lafayette Players. Mr. Muse has had fifteen years' experience in Negro amusements. (2) Elizabeth Boyer, the clever little leading lady in Reol Production Company's release of Paul Lawrence Dunbar's "The Sport of the Gods." (3) Sydney P. Dones, the lead in the Booker-ee Film Company's "Loyal Hearts," "The Reformation" and "My First Love"

J. A. JACKSON'S PAGE

In The Interest Of The Colored Actor, Actress And Musician Of America.

COMMUNICATIONS TO OUR OFFICES, 1493 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Billboard 8/6/21

outh. Over 27 different composers' works were displayed, ranging from the blues to operatic numbers and including the successful melodies of "Shuffle Along" and the more pretentious writings, such as Burleigh's.

The officers of the national body are: Officers and board of directors: Henry L. Grant, president, Washington, D. C.; Lena D. Holt, vice-president, Chicago, Ill.; Alice Carter Simmons, secretary, Tuskegee, Ala.; Deacon Johnson, treasurer, New York City; Clarence C. White, national organizer, Boston, Mass.; Carl Diton, Philadelphia, Pa.; H. B. Johnson, Nashville, Tenn.; Kemper Harreld, Atlanta, Ga. Advisory Board: R. Nathaniel Dett, chairman; Harriet Gibbs Marshall, Melville Charlton, W. H. Loving and R. Augustus Lawson.

Other prominent artists present were Robert Dougee, Naomi Talley and Eugene Marrs Martin, of New York; J. Wesley Jones, conductor of the big progressive choral society of a thousand voices in Chicago; Helen Hagan, the pianist; Miss Nicholson, composer of New Orleans; Prof. John Work, of Fiske; Savoma Talley, J. W. Work, who has compiled the great collection of Negro Folklore; Luella Sykes Smith, Henry Ethridge, Cleota Collins.

Many of the artists appeared in one or the other of three concerts presented during the week in different auditoriums in the city.

If nothing more was accomplished the colored artists assembled or represented have unmistakably demonstrated their value to the musical field and their full ability to nurture their equity in the profession, to say nothing of the inclination toward aggressive and progressive advances in the matter of better technical preparation.

THE DRESSING ROOM CLUB

Parades, Gives Show and Dances—First Negro Theatrical Club To Appear on Broadway—A Novelty in Kilties

The Dressing Room Club, composed of the leading colored actors, performers, composers, musicians, authors and artists in allied professions, staged a parade on Broadway, in the Rialto district on July 28 which, because of the distinctiveness of the Scotch costume worn, the personal popularity of its members and the fact that it was the first appearance of a Negro club of artists on the big street attracted much attention.

After parading Broadway from 40th to 59th streets they went to Harlem, and there strutted for the edification of their colored friends on Lenox and Seventh avenues.

In the evening of the same day they presented a number of their members at Manhattan Casino in a big vaudeville program, after which their guests danced till early morning.

The Casino program included Charles S. Gilpin, "The Emperor Jones;" Moss and Frye, Creamer and Layton, the Creole Cocktail Company, Wilbur Sweatman, Leon Williams, Jordon & Tyler, Dink Stewart, Sims and Warfield, Irvin Jones, Joe Sheftal, Clarence Muse, Sam Wilson, Lew Payton, Jimmy Johnson, Conaway Brothers and the Ebony Nights Girls.

The proceeds are to apply to the purchase of a new club house, the organization and its collection of historical pictures, manuscripts and programs having outgrown the present quarters at 139th and Seventh avenue.

One of the objects of the club is to impress the world with the dignity and economic value of the Negro element of the profession. To that end more than 200 of the profession have associated themselves in one of the most interesting and intelligent clubs in the city. Their effort to preserve to posterity the history of the Negro in theatricals is indeed a worthy purpose.

COLORED ACTORS' UNION

The Colored Actors' Union staged a monster midnight show at the Howard Theater, Washington, D. C., July 22, for the benefit of the Home Building Fund of the Colored Artists. The following acts gave their able support: The Gonsell White Six, Boots Hopes, Edmonia Henderson, Washington and Samuels, Eddie Green, Gibson Trio, the Too-Sweet, Kelly and Kelly, Nit and Tuck, Ebbie Burton, McLaurin and Thomas.

The Colored Actors' big National Day was Tuesday, August 2.

Attorney Gaskins, of Washington, D. C., has secured incorporated papers, and the union has been granted its charter.

Left to right: Sydney Kirkpatrick, character lead; Cleo Desmond, leading lady; Edna Lewis Thomas; Andrew Bishop, the high salaried leading man; J. Lawrence Criner; Mrs Charles Anderson, emotional leads; Charles Moore, pioneer Lafayette character actor and president of the C. T. A. P. Club; J.

LAFAYETTE PLAYERS

LAFAYETTE PLAYERS

J. Lawrence Criner; Mrs Charles Anderson, emotional leads; Charles Moore, pioneer Lafayette character actor and president of the C. T. & P. Club; J
characters.

ft to right: Sydney Kirkpatrick, character lead; Cleo Desmond, leading lady; Edna Lewis Thomas; Andrew Bishop, the high salaried leading man;

J.A. JACKSONS PAGE

In The Interest Of The Colored Actor; Actress And Musician Of America.

COMMUNICATIONS TO OUR OFFICES, 1493 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

8/6/21

...ith. Over 27 different companies, with a ... of the Negro element of the profession. To ...ployed, ranging from the bizes to operatic ... that end more than 200 of the profession have ...union act including the successful Musician ... associated themselves in one of the most inter- ...s "Shuffle Along" and the more pretentious ... ering and intelligent clubs in the city. Their ...ritings, such as Burleigh's. ... first to preserve to posterity the history of the ...

The officers of the national body are: Officers ... Negro in theatricals is indeed a worthy pur- ...ual board of directors: Henry L. Grant, ... president, Washington, D. C.; Lea D. Holt, ...ice-president, Chicago, Ill.; Alice Carter Sim- ...mons, secretary, Tuskegee, Ala.; Deacon John- ...son, treasurer, New York City; Clarence C. ...White, national organizer, Boston, Mass.; Carl ...Ditson, Philadelphia, Pa.; H. B. Johnson, Nash- ...ville, Tenn.; Kemper Harreld, Atlanta, Ga.; ...Adriaty Board; R. Nathaniel Dett, chairman; ...Harriet Gibbs Marshall, Melville Charlton, W. ...E. Loring and R. Augustus Lawton.

Other prominent artists present were Robert ...Dougee, Naomi Talley and Eugene Mars Mar- ...sh, of New York; J. Wesley Jones, conductor ...and voice H Chicago; Helen Hagan, the pi- ...ist; Miss Nicholson, composer of New Or- ...leans; Prof. John Work, of Fisk; Revons Til- ...ley, J. W. Work, who has compiled the great ...collection of Negro Folklore; Lucile Sykes Smith, ...Henry Ethridge, Cleota Gordon.

Many of the artists appeared in one or the ...other of the concerts presented during the ...week in different auditoriums in the city.

It nothing more was accomplished the colored ...artists assembled or represented here unmis- ...takably demonstrated their value to the musical ...field and their full ability to sustain their ...equity in the profession, to say nothing of the ...inclination toward aggressive and progressive ...advances in the matter of better technical prepa- ...ration.

COLORED ACTORS' UNION

The Colored Actors' Union staged a master- ...midnight show at the Howard Theater, Wash- ...ington, D. C., July 22, for the benefit of the ...Home Building Fund of the Colored Artists. The ...following acts give their able support: The ...Garrett Girls Marshall, Melville Charlton, W. Gomell White Sis, Boots Boyer, Edmonia Hen- ...derson, Washington and Hamtels, Eddie Green, ...Gibbs Trio, the Toodsweet, Kelly and Kelly, ...Nit and Tuck, Ebbie Burton, McEarth and ...Thomas.

The Colored Actors' Big National Day was ...Tuesday, August 2.

Attorney Gaskins, of Washington, D. C., has ...assisted incorporated papers, and the union has ...been granted its charter.

THE DRESSING ROOM CLUB

Parades, Gives Show and Dances—First Negro Theatrical Club To Appear on Broadway—A Novelty in Kilties

The Dressing Room Club, composed of the ...leading colored actors, performers, composers, ...musicians, authors and artists in allied profes- ...sions, staged a parade on Broadway, in the ...white district on July 23 which, because of the ...kilted costumes of the Scotch colonies worn, the ...picturesqueness of its members and the fact ...that it was the first appearance of a Negro ...club of artists on the big street attracted much ...attention.

After parading Broadway from 40th to 50th ...streets they went to Harlem, and there strutted ...for the edification of their colored friends on ...Lenox and Seventh avenues.

In the evening of the same day they presented ...a number of their members at Manhattan Casino ...in a big Vaudeville program, after which their ...feets danced till early morning.

The Casino program included Charles S. Gil- ...pin, "The Emperor Jones," Miss Ida Frye, ...Cecil Cunningham and Layton, the Creole Quintet Com- ...pany, Wilbur Sweatman, Lew Williams, Jor- ...dan & Tyler, Dink Stewart, Sims and Warfield, ...Bert Sims, Joe Shelton, Clarence Sims, Sam ...Wilson, Lew Payton, Jimmy Johnson, Conway ...Wilson and the Kinsey Nicols Girls.

The proceeds are to apply to the purchase of a ...new club house, the organization not its owning ...one of similar pictures, manuscripts and ...relics being acquired, the present quarters ...on Seventh avenue, the object of the club is to improve ...the morals and artistic and economic welfare

Theatrical - 1921

Troupes, Individual.

JOHN T. GIBSON

Wizard of Show Business Celebrates Seventh Anniversary as Owner and Manager

Defender 1/24/21

Chicago

Philadelphia, Pa., Jan. 21.—Seven years ago John T. Gibson bought the Standard Theater, and since that time he has expended over $100,000 in beautifying the lobby alone with hand carved decorations, modern oplex interchangeable electrical display, etc., and an equal amount in other additions and improvements. Gibson's Standard Theater is the undisputed leader, on its seventh anniversary, and Mr. Gibson is the only man in the United States who holds the distinction of being the sole owner and manager of a big time house.

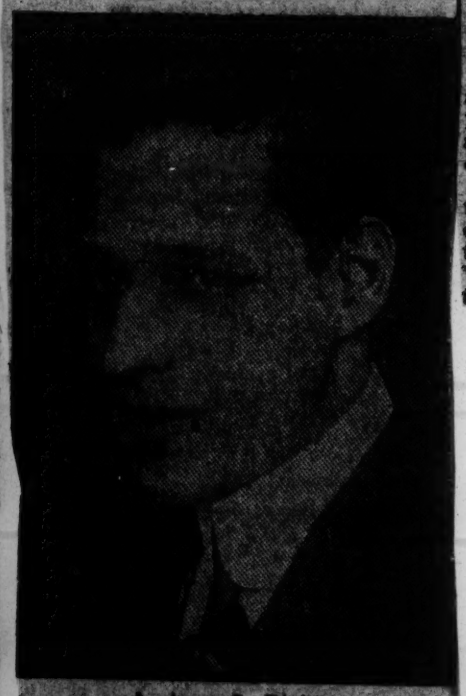
As one performer has well put it, "When you have played Gibson's Standard you have reached the zenith of achievement." We doff our hats to Mr. and Mrs. John T. Gibson and wish them many more successful anniversaries.

REAL STAR

Andrew S. Bishop Easily Most Popular of All Stock Players

Defender 6/11/21

From time to time many arguments take place as to who, of all the male members of the Lafayette Players, is the most competent and most popular. While the work of none of them is always above honest criticism, it is the writer's firm belief, after many inquiries among both men and women theatergoers in practically all the towns in which the various companies have exhibited their wares, that the subject of the ac-



Andrew S. Bishop

companying cut is the gazink who holds the palm. As a portrayer of "manly leads" Old Andrew is without a peer and it is a fact that from the players of "manly leads" comes practically the entire tribe known as matinee idols. Of course, Bish has been well dealt with when personal appearance is concerned. Being a tall, well put up gent of splendid proportions, with a vast amount of intelligence backed by a goodly bunch of education, it is not to be wondered at that he gives impressive performances along the "manly" line. He has a well trained voice along with his attributes and knows just how to select his clothes and how to wear them. Putting these things all together the result is O. K. He at one time was considered a fairly good athlete and even during the present days of easy living he keeps in fair physical condition. He has been known to do a little running and then take an alcoholic bath as often as ten or twelve times a day. Mr. Volstead made arrangements, however, for Bish to cut the number of baths down materially and as a result he doesn't do as much running as he at one time did. In fact, he sits on the bench almost as much as does the writer, who never had a shine on the seat of his trousers until B. V. D. Meaning Before Volstead Did.

ATLANTA GA GEORGIAN
JUNE 6 1921

Opportunity For Negro Is Shown in Picture

"Your Pride and Achievement," a motion picture dealing with the opportunity that confronts the Southern negro, as well as some of the instances of success achieved by the negroes of the South, made it's initial showing to a large crowd of A[illegible] negroes in the City Auditor[illegible] riday evening.

The picture is a product of the Pyramid Pictures Corporation of Chicago, under the personal supervision of Edward L. Snyder, who spent nearly two months in the study of local conditions of the race. It points out the natural opportunities of their native land and shows a great number of Southern enterprises owned by negroes and which are entirely dependent upon negro capital and labor.

The picture will go from Atlanta to Nashville, Tenn., and then to Chicago, where it will be widely distributed through the North and West. It will remain at the Auditorium through Saturday evening.

T. O. B. A. DOINGS

THEATER OWNERS' BOOKING ASSOCIATION

Defender 6/4/21

New Orleans, La., Wednesday, June 8.—The Austin Dramatic Players, headed by Miss Birdie Gibson, are the attraction at the Lyric Theater this week. A very clever bunch of actors and actresses. Nice costumes and scenery. The show is going big.

Pensacola, Fla., Wednesday, June 8.—Slim Henderson, the well known comedian, and his Lyric Road Show are the attraction at the Belmont Theater this week. This is the best show that has played in Pensacola this season. Fun and some more fun. Mr. and Mrs. Cummings are more than pleased with the results.

Macon, Ga., Thursday, June 9.—The Dainty Maids, which are known as Drake & Walker No. 2, are playing a very wonderful engagement at the Douglas Theater. This is the last attraction that is going to play this season at the Douglas Theater, because the new $150,000 theater, which is in course of construction, is nearing completion and only the finishing touches remain to be applied, and the doors will be swung open for the public next Monday, June 13. Mr. Douglas certainly deserves credit for his untiring efforts in giving the Macon people such deserved consideration. His new theater will be absolutely the best equipped theater in the South. He has spent much time and money and has taken great pains to make it sanitary as well as beautiful, and all accommodations are there for the public, and performers as well, as Mr. Douglas knows from experience that the actors must have adequate quarters in order properly to perform their duties on the stage. He made all the conveniences necessary for their comfort in this magnificent structure, and from now on it is assured that it will be a pleasure for any company to play Mr. Douglas' theater.

Winston-Salem, Thursday, June 9.—The Mills & Frisby Company is the attraction at the Dunbar this week.

Indianapolis, Ind., Wednesday, June 8.—The original and only Hambone Jones Company, featuring Sam Gray, Virginia Liston and Annibelle Cooke, is at the Washington Theater. A wonderful show.

Tampa, Fla., Wednesday, June 8.—The Palace Theater is playing a very clever company known as the Lincoln Amusement Company this week. Although this company consists of only nine people, it is the best big little show that has played in Tampa for some time.

Savannah, Ga., Wednesday, June 8.—The Smith & Butler Company, featuring Miss Laura Smith herself, is at the Pekin this week. Miss Smith has won the audience from her first appearance on the stage. The show is going big.

Chicago, Ill., Thursday, June 9.—Hardtack Jackson's Twentieth Century Players are the attraction at the New Monogram. H. B. Miller, proprietor and manager, is having the time of his life to handle the immense crowds which are flocking in to see this wonderful attraction.

Pittsburg, Pa., Thursday, June 9.—The Cotton Blossoms, headed by Henry Bowman, are packing them in at the Star Theater this week. Leroy White with his droll comedy is well liked by the crowds. The show is going wonderfully.

Charleston, S. C., Wednesday, June 8.—The Watts & Willis Company, featuring Madame Petty Willis, the sweet singer, is playing at the Lincoln Theater this week, more than making good.

St. Louis, Mo., Wednesday, June 8.—Henry R. Dixon and his Jazzland Girls are doing a turn-away business for Mr. Turpin at the Booker Washington Theater this week. Better shows cannot be desired.

Louisville, Ky., Thursday, June 9.—Frank Montgomery's "Hello 1921"—20 people, real artists, and a beautiful chorus, artistic scenery and gorgeous costumes—opened a two weeks' return engagement at the Lincoln Theater last Monday night, and standing room was at a premium. Mr. Dillon admitted that he was unable to cope with the situation in handling the crowds. He was forced to secure extra help for this engagement.

Cleveland, O., Thursday, June 9.—McGarr-DeGaston's Ragtime Steppers are the attraction at the Grand Central Theater. Miss Thornton, featuring Miss Mamie Smith's Crazy Blues, is forced to respond to a number of encores nightly. The many people who have heard Miss Mamie Smith have pronounced that she has nothing upon Miss Thornton. The entire show is wonderful.

Jacksonville, Fla., Thursday, June 9.—John Mason and his Dixie Beach Girls are pleasing the Jacksonville theatergoers. The Austin Theater is packed nightly to see this wonderful aggregation.

Memphis, Tenn., Thursday, June 9.—The Palace Theater is playing Pal Williams' Dixie Belles. Crack Shot Hatley and Roscoe Monticello are the talk of the town. A great show.

Shreveport, La., Wednesday, June 8.—Sid Perrin and Miss Irene Hall, with the Sid Perrin Players, are the attraction at the Star Theater this week. A very clever bunch.

Atlanta, Ga., Thursday, June 9.—Mr. Bailey's 81 Theater is playing Miss Billie Young and her Shoulder Shakers this week. A nice bunch of workers and a beautiful chorus.

Dallas, Tex., Thursday, June 9.—The Drake & Walker Bombay Girls opened the Park Theater last Monday, and standing room was at a premium. The show went over big. They are booked here for two weeks. Glad to have them.

Nashville, Tenn., Wednesday, June 8.—The Bijou Theater is playing a very clever company this week, and this is E. D. Lee's Creole Belles, featuring Miss Della Watson. Better shows are hard to get, and the company consists of a bunch of real hard workers, and the theatergoers are appreciating their efforts.

Detroit, Mich., Thursday, June 9.—The large Koppin Theater is turning them away and it is impossible to accommodate all the curious people who are anxious to get in this well known playhouse to see and hear the much talked about Sandy Burns Company. It is hoped that Mr. Shook, the manager, will be successful in retaining this company for a second week. He owes this to the theater-loving public to see that they all have an opportunity to witness these performers before the company leaves Detroit.

MAYBELLE WHITMAN

Defender 6/11/21

Miss Whitman, of the famous Whitman Sisters, whose act, "May-belle and Dixie Boys," is one of the most popular in big time vaudeville, has done well in the show game. Miss Whitman, who has the knack of knowing how to handle, with great advantage, her own affairs along the

"Maybelle"

booking line, is a business woman of no little ability. Her success during the past season is not her first victorious journey over the better class of vaudeville circuits, as she was heard from years ago in the best of company. She has mixed the mediocre with the mighty from time to time and as a consequence her name is as famous on the "jik" time as it is on the United. Uniform success has met her efforts in both latitudes, and there seems to be no reason why she and her clever sister, Alberta, and the boys who ride with her won't journey on along the road of success. Here's hoping. (As we used to say.)

America's Greatest Colored Show, Bar None

THE SMARTER SET
WITH
WHITNEY & TUTT

Now Playing—HOWARD THEATRE, Washington, D. C.
Week of June 13—THE LAFAYETTE, New York, N. Y.

LINCOLN GARDENS
Formerly ROYAL GARDENS
459 E. 31ST ST. WILLIAM GEORGE, Manager
DANCE NIGHTLY on the Finest Floor in Chicago
WICKLIFFE'S FAMOUS GINGER BAND
ELEANOR WILSON THADDEUS CRUMP
CLARA LEWIS JANIE STRAINE
REFRESHMENTS of the FINEST QUALITY

Defender 6/11/21

T. O. B. A.
(Theater Owners' Booking Association)

Notice to All Acts:

SINGLES, TEAMS, TRIOS
AND ALL KINDS OF
NOVELTY TURNS

WRITE or WIRE OPEN TIME IMMEDIATELY

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO

SAM E. REEVIN
304-306 Pound Building, Chattanooga, Tenn.

ELECT OFFICERS

T. O. B. A. Selects Heads for Various Departments for Coming Fiscal Year

Defender 6/11/21

At the special meeting which was held in the offices of the Theater Owners' Booking Association, 304-306 Pound Building, Chattanooga, Tenn., Wednesday, May 18, the following new officers to replace the late T. Spencer Finlay and J. J. Miller were elected:

E. S. Stone, the popular manager of the Washington Theater, Indianapolis, Ind., was unanimously elected as one of the board of directors to fill the vacancy left by T. Spencer Finlay. W. S. Scales of the Lafayette Theater of Winston-Salem, N. C., was also unanimously elected as secretary of this organization, and Charles P. Bailey of Atlanta, Ga., was elected on the board of directors to succeed Mr. Miller of Charleston, S. C.

The roster of the officers and directors of the T. O. B. A. is as follows:

Milton Starr, Nashville, Tenn., president.

Charles H. Turpin, St. Louis, Mo., vice-president.

W. S. Scales, Winston-Salem, N. C., secretary.

Sam E. Reevin, Chattanooga, Tenn., treasurer and manager.

C. H. Douglas, Macon, Ga.; Clarence Bennett, New Orleans, La.; H. J. Hury, Birmingham, Ala.; E. S. Stone, Indianapolis, Ind.; Charles P. Bailey, Atlanta, Ga.; Milton Starr, Nashville, Tenn., and Sam E. Reevin, Chattanooga, directors.

From this list all interested in vaudeville can see that they can safely entrust the bookings in the T. O. B. A. hands.

Theatrical - 1921

Troupes, Individual

"Goat Alley" is Dramatic Offering Wort[illegible] Its Name

New York Age (BY L[illegible]

FOR some reason the [illegible] right has a penchant for dipicting the Negro [illegible] his worst. In "Goat Alley," written by Ernest [illegible]bertson, there has been no exception to the general ru[illegible]t "Negro Play," which opened Monday evening at th[illegible]tre, is in no sense uplifting and even an X-ray exa[illegible]ould fail to disclose its real mission.

"Goat Alley" is laid in Washington, D. C, but it is not necessary to take a trip to the nation's capital to get into an environment such as the piece pervades. In New York on the East Side, the West Side and in other sections of the metropolis you will find "Goat Alley," peopled only by white residents.

An impartial analysis would disclose that "Goat Alley" should be characterized as a play dealing more with economics than with race. As the slums are very much in evidence in every city, there is very little likelihood of Mr. Culbertson's "Goat Alley" functioning as a magic wand and wiping out a lowly district where some colored people are unfortunately forced to dwell.

With the exception of Barrington Carter and Daisy Garrett, the acting is amateurish. Most of the people in the cast have had little or no stage experience; then they are burdened by being compelled to use the playwright's version of what is "Negro dialect." A most glaring stage absurdity is a colored actor heroically striving to talk as the white author thinks is absolutely necessary in order to make the character seem real, although the "Negro dialect" is as foreign to the actor as Greek or the language of the Zulu.

It is quite certain that "Goat Alley" will not be a landmark in Manhattan for any length of time, but will suddenly disappear from our midsts before it becomes so popular a thoroughfare as Lenox or Seventh Avenue.

The most significant feature of the play is that it points out it is going to be extremely difficult for persons to write and stage a play dealing chiefly with Negro life who do not think Negro.

The dramatic critics of the New York Herald discusses "Goat Alley" in the following strain:

"Three acts were occupied in revealing to the public the degradation of Negro life in this particular locality. Any more contemptible effort in the name of the poor old theatre which may be the target for any kind of futility it would be difficult to conceive. All the characters were Negroes. The heroine in the first act received three lovers and a fourth man who might be understood in the ethics of "Goat Alley" to stand toward her in the relation of a husband. After this amorous succession the stage manager in the cause of drama staged a scrap on which the curtain mercifully fell.

"Here his observation—of course such an unreal faculty as imagination would not have been admitted in the structure of a masterpiece of realism like "Goat Alley"—failed the author and he repeated the incidents of the first act. The same lovers returned with one exception and the stage manager lacking the courage of the playwright did not dare repeat the fight. So the curtain fell without excitement. It was all unspeakably dull and monotonous. The Negro actors avoided naturalness as assidously as the author sought it. They spoke with the artificiality of parrots. Not a genuinely Negro voice was to be heard. Indeed, some of them seemed to shun any suggesaion of their race in their speech. Yet they were no more hopeless in manner than Dr. Victor Robinson, who considerately prepared the spectators for the fate awaiting them by his speech."

N Y C. TRIBUNE.
AUGUST 24, 1921

"Put and Take" Gives All Show for Their Money

PRINCIPALS OF THE CAST

Ham Tree Harrington, Earl Dancer, Andrew Tribble, Cora Green, Mildred Smallwood, Irvin C. Miller, Emmett Anthony, Fred La Joy, Florence Parham, Lillian Goodner, Mae Cowder and Maxie.

"Put and Take" opened at the Town Hall last night and added to "Shuffle Along," another all-colored musical show for the pilgrim in search of amusement novelties. It combines the fascinating execution of craps and the quick action of its compound namesake. "Put and Take" not only gallops, but it spins.

This revue is credited to Irvin C. Miller, the music being written by Spencer Williams, Perry Bradford and Tim Brymm. Tim Brymm, who alternately cpazed and threatened the orchestra from the leader's box, was one of the interesting figures in Jim Europe's band.

The principals have been assembled from some of the best negro acts in vaudeville, but they have left most of their music hall jokes and stage business behind them and for the greater part the new show is honestly original. The piece is most interesting when it sticks to the genre of American minstrelsy and dull only when it apes the "White Way" over yonder, particularly in the blight of the single-hoop costume.

Its finest achievement is the chorus, which is without a listless spot. This chorus fairly vaunts its joy and carries itself as plumed for a career. It has enthusiasm, agility, grace and is fairly well voiced.

Emmett Anthony is the laureate [illegible]ond alarm because of the proximity o[illegible] the school and a row of frame dwellings that appeared threatened.

The blaze was spectacular, drawing thousands of spectators who were held in check by the Ralph Avenue reserves. Later the Gates Avenue reserves were turned out to handle the crowd.

The occupants of all threatened houses were ordered out when the premises seemed in danger. Many were lightly clad and women carrying children hurried through the streets seeking shelter in the homes of neighbors.

The cause of the fire is not known. The damage was estimated at $10,000.

NEW YORK HERALD
AUGUST 24, 1921

NEGROES SHOW SKILL IN 'PUT AND TAKE'

Revue at Town Hall Moves With Much Speed.

"Put and Take" opened at the Town Hall last night as another of those negro extravaganzas which have lately taken heart of grace from the prevalance of "blues" and 'Mason and Dixon line songs, and decided to enter the whirl of Broadway. Irvin C. Miller the producer, called it "a colorful musical revue," and it was. It moved with surprising speed, considering that this was the first concerted performance, and the company, despite the evidence of glistening brows, "opened cold."

They displayed all the characteristic intuitive skill of their race at agile jigging, syncopated melodies and comedy—In fact, they seemed to know they had but to roll their eyes to gain a laugh. The elongated producer himself, who is a brother of the Miller teamed with Lyles in "Shuffle Along," the pioneer negro venue, took a hand dancing and doing comedy scenes with his diminutive partner, Emmett Anthony. Miller's crowning glory occurred when he beat the bass drum in a heterogeneous band conducted by Anthony.

The performance dealt with the current craze of the toddle top, had a band of tumblers, displayed various entertaining vaudeville specialties and, indeed, had everything, including in Chappell and Spinette a brunette young man who sang the prologue from "Pagliacci" as he had an idea Caruso might have done it. Ham Tree Harrington, Earl Dancer, Andrew Tribble, Cora Green and Mildred Smallwood were others who distinguished themselves. The chorus danced with vim; there were numerous changes of costume and mounting that represented a large investment of capital. The Town Hall, which has housed some unique offerings, added not the least to its list last night.

FAST AND FURIOUS IS "PUT AND TAKE"

EVE WORLD
AUGUST 24, 1921

Negro Show at Town Hall a Thoroughly Enjoyable Breeze From Dixie.

Several weighty matters of civic interest were threshed out last night at the Town Hall. Chief among these was the question as to whether "Snagem Blues" and "Beedle 'Em Boo" ought to be danced, sung, wrestled or cried. It was decided to pool the ways and means. "Put and Take," as interpreted by Irvin C. Miller's troupe of double jointed, triple voiced negros, is as much of one as the other. These nimble legged folk put their ears, eyebrows, hips, feet and enthusiasm on every available square inch of space on the Town Hall stage in their various musical gyrations, then proceeded to take high jumps, blue notes, spells of madness and the audience's breath in whirlwind fashion. For this is a fast and furious negro ragtime piece.

Lieut. Tim Brymm held his baton high above his head at 8.30 o'clock, talked to his drums a moment, then said "Let 'er go." She went. Ham Tree Harrington shuffled in and sang a song, then forty frolicking friars from Dixie came tearing in to wriggle their spangles. The music supplied by Spencer Williams, if at times, indistinguishable as to tempo and words, afforded Cora Green ample means for walking in two directions at one and the same time, and inspired Mildred Smallwood to hysterical heights in its more sentimental moments.

"Put and Take" lives up to its name in another way. It takes a couple of popular song numbers for its own use. "June Love" is one, sung by Fred La Joy and manhandled by "the girls." "Strut Miss Lizzie" is another, done splendidly by a talented little girl, Miss Florence Parham. This latter was the performance's high spot.

There are numerous Southern melodies set to sizzling music, such as "Creole Gal," "Wedding Bells," "Dog," a special number sung exceedingly well by Emmett Anthony, and "Separation Blues," by Lillian Goodner and Mae Crowder. Strangely enough, there's a graveyard scene for comedy, in which Anthony and Mr. Miller appear, showing these funny gentlemen at their best. And there are other laughable sets into which has been written a steady flow of harmless and at times refreshing comedy.

The girls are uncommonly well gowned and they're light on their fee[illegible] ever girls were. They never stop dancing. This is not always a virtue here. How can a girl croon a love song when she's gasping for breath?

"Put and Take" is a thoroughly enjoyable breeze from Dixie. Even if you can't understand what parts of it are about.

Q. L. M.

DANCING ALSO A FEATURE

N. Y. C. TELEGRAPH
AUGUST 24, 1921

Book and by Irvin C. Miller and Edgar Forest and Music by Several Composers.

By LEO A. MARSH.

Throw an equal portion of sharps and flats into an orchestra pit and mix well with a batch of ebony clefs, and there you have the recipe for "Put and Take," the latest all-colored revue, which arrived at the Town Hall last night.

Spencer Williams, Tim Brymn and Perry Bradford are the musical cooks in this instance, while Irvin C. Miller added the seasoning with a book and lyrics. The McCormick Amusement Company, Inc., supervised the stewing process and a good-sized crowd of first nighters sampled the dish when the concocters got throught with their efforts.

And be it said to the credit of the latter, "Put and Take" is rather palatable on the whole. It has several catchy numbers of the wild and syncopated variety, notably a song which bears the name of the production, and the dancers—that includes the entire company, by the way—go at their task as if it were a labor of love.

Moreover, there is an acrobatic team in the finale of the first act that gives away the secret of where the Arabian tumblers really come from. They hail from West Fifty-third street or we missed the entire point of the show.

As for the book, it is frankly a revue, with no attempt at coherence, and it runs the justly famous gamut of sites all the way from Georgia to New York, with a stop-over privilege to take in a circus by the wayside. Most of the lyrics are equally unconventional, especially one set referring to "Dog" and another having to do with no less dignified a subject than "Beedle 'em Boo," but the drums and cymbals make up in rhythm what the words may lack in meaning, so perhaps it was all for the best.

Quite a pretence, too, is made in the staging of "Put and Take," and the scenic effects, most of which are by way of satin drapes, are at times quite striking.

One of the most popular numbers last night was the act of little Florence Parham, a diminutive colored girl, who sang and danced with all the assurance and some of the effectiveness of a seasoned actress. For noise, however, Lillian Goodner and Mae Crowder easily led the field in a duet number. But, to look on the brighter side of it, their song might have lasted longer—and fared worse.

Irvin C. Miller's Efforts Fail to Impress

Jack Lait—Famous Writer Covers "Put and Take" in Detail

Chicago Spirit 9/14/21

(From Variety.)

By Irvin C. Miller. Music by Spencer Williams, Tim Brymm and Perry Bradford. Presented by McCormick Amusement Co. Cast: Bernu Barber, Ham-Tree Harrington, Earl Dancer, Andrew Tribble, Cora Green, Mildred Smallwood, Irvin C. Miller, Emmett Anthony, Fred La Joy, Florence Parham, Hobart Shand, Lillian Goodner, Mae Crowder, Violet Branch, Virgie Cousins, Essie Worth, Joe Peterson, George Braxton, Al Pizarro, John Roscoe, Julius Foxworth, Roscoe Wickham, Chappell and Stinette, Percy William, Walter Richerson, Claude Lawson Arthur Ford, Maxie.

Eager to ride the crest of the wave stirred up by "Shuffling Along," this Colored aggregation rushed in near Broadway, where angels do not always fear to tread. Some angel must have fluttered his wings into this, and up to the finale it looked as though he was badly singed. But that finish may yet save his finish, predicts Jack Lait in Variety.

Irvin C. Miller (a brother of the Miller of Miller and Lyle, the cards of "Shuffling Along") is all over the program and all over the performance. That makes him a half-brother to a hit. If anything hurt "Put and Take" it was Miller. It is another instance of a straight man starring himself with his own backing and making a whole company play straight to him. Miller lionizes himself, is in every comedy scene without exception, and toward the end gives himself an entrance that takes two scenes to work up and then flops utterly.

There is, throughout, too much effort to be "dressed up" and dignified. Only at the very end does it become the novelty that it should be if it wants to survive at all and have any excuse for invading Times Square. Colored performers cannot vie with white ones, and Colored producers cannot play within an apple's throw of Ziegfeld and try to compete with him. On 39th street another attraction flivved the night before ("The Mask of Hamlet") because Italians wanted to out-Americanize Americans. And here Colored folks seemed to have set out to show the whites they are just as white as anybody. They may be as good, but they're different—and, in their entertainment, at any rate they should remain different—distinct—indigenous.

Miller, especially, sought to outdo all the paleface leading men in sartorial elegance (on the level, not of the extravagant school such as Walker employed), and cast a damper on the good time whenever he did it. A quartet hacked away in dress suits when it would have been a success in plantation jumpers, etc. The girls' wardrobe ran to tawdry "gowns" and frocks when they should have been fancifully dressed as picks, Zulus, cannibals or cotton pickers. There wasn't enough true Colored stuff in the show—until that finale.

Maxie (of Reisenweber's) romped in from Heaven ten minutes before the last shut-in, tied the show into ribbons with his dizzy hoofing, and led the ensemble into a rabit mob scene of prancing, shouting, moaning, yelling, hopping, shimmying, eye-rolling, wiggling, leaping and fit-throwing. At last it was regular darky business. Two-thirds of the house was on its feet and up the aisles, but nobody left until the last curtain. That took more encores than the rest of the show put together, by actual demand. That was right, that was unalloyed with foolish seeking after "class," and that was the kind of amusement that, had it been followed all the way, would have made this a sure take instead of a probable put.

The only flashes of real ta[lent] cept Maxie, came from tw[o] skinned gals—Cora Gree[n] ence Parham. Florence with a childish sopran[o] must be around 12 yea[rs] sang a ballad fetchingly [and] a light jazz with a whim[sy] that was a riot. The ch[orus] tionably has what it takes [in] performer that all races [re]spond to.

Miss Green, a remarkable [girl] with flashing white teeth and [fas]tizing black eyes, was shelved [for] most of the running order. H[er] chances came early. As a dancer, as a soubret and a pl[easing] sight and a snappy bit of per[son]ality, she lit up the stage when[ever] she trod it. In the finale she sh[one] like a gem, working with a sinuous abandon that was both nature and art—both jungle and theater.

Emmett Anthony, working as Miller's partner almost always, got some strong laughs across and copped the song hit of the night, "Georgia Rose," a sympathy-plea for the Colored girl. Otherwise there was considerable amateurishness of single and collective work. The "book" was stiff and off the black keys most of the time, and it got about what it deserved, generally. Chappell and Stinette, down for a specialty, failed to appear. It was said that they had missed railroad connections and would be in the next night, Wednesday. The opening had already been postponed without notice the Saturday night before, so they seemed very late.

The Town Hall, on 43d street east of Broadway, has no gridiron and cannot set flat scenery. Therefore this whole show worked in drapes and could not even fly these, but closed them into center, which made confusion at the finishes of numbers and scenes, and that hurt here and there. But for such things audiences allow. Also, the fact that most of the hangings were soiled and showed second-hand wear and tear was forgiven, because it was not looked to for a pretentious and punctilious exhibit.

There were 20 girls in the chorus, and 10 men. In all the company is numerous enough, and at the finale looked like 100. The girls included two or three good workers and about as many good lookers, but did not turn out the pep expected of Colored choruses, which should be wild and in perpetual motion. The old Coney Island Colored shows used to have the choruses that stepped. This one, like most of the show, was undertoned and piano. There was little display of limbs and arms, apparently a sad box office mistake, for these children of nature might be expected to bare an occasional knee, at least.

The talking bits were of the old burlesque school—the graveyard, the bakery window, the comedy band, the bazaar, etc. It has often been said that most of these were originally Negro acts. If so, they have come home again to roost. But it seems they served the white chicken-thieves better than their original dark owners if that is so.

The mere novelty of a Colored revue near Broadway may get "Put and Take" over. If it does, any Colored show can do it.

Theatrical – 1921.
Troupes, Individual etc.

Drama and Music

N. Y. C. SUN
MAY 23, 1921

'Shuffle Along' Starts Its Run; the Messrs. Shubert Name Their Newest Theatre the Imperial.

There is nothing slow about "Shuffle Along" except its title. This summer show was presented by its all-colored company last evening at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall to the evident pleasure of the invited guests. This company of singers and dancers has the best colored talent; that includes a pretty Creole chorus. Some girls are half white and some of them look about 99 per cent. white. Then there is a spirited negro orchestra, and even Messrs. Sissle and Blake, who wrote the songs and lyrics, are colored.

Everybody sings; in fact there are more pleasing voices than one finds in the average musical comedy. And how they all dance, especially the chorus, which is full of dash and ginger. There are many tuneful songs, most of them being of the syncopated variety. In fact the only times the show drags are during some of the comedy scenes, which lack the speed of the rest of the show.

Its book deals with a mayoralty election in Jimtown with three candidates for the office, two of whom are proprietors of a grocery store. In the second act the new mayor is ruling the town with a high hand. He is due for a speedy fall, but the plot is lost sight of before the final curtain.

The company has a real prima donna, Miss Lottie Gee; a "nut" soubrette named Gertrude Saunders, the Palm Beach Four and other entertainers, including several excellent singers, not the least of whom is Noble Sissle, one of the authors of the piece.

"Shuffle Along" is a decided novelty and it possesses the liveliest colored company that has been seen here in years.

N. Y. C TELEGRAM
MAY 23, 1921

"Shuffle Along" with Colored Players

With the aid of a proscenium made of draperies, the Sixty-third Street Music Hall, which has been used for recitals, has been transformed into a real theatre and a group of colored players are presenting there a lively musical production which is happily called "Shuffle Along."

The piece is modelled somewhat after the fashion of a burlesque show, with lively songs and dances and occasional comedy scenes. When the colored players are expressing themselves in their own characteristic way, as in the unaccompanied quartet in the second act, in "The Oriental Blues" and in "Bandanna Days," their efforts are interesting and entertaining.

When they essay to sing recitatives and build up musical numbers in the manner approved for Broadway musical productions they are not so happy.

Eubie Blake, who assisted in writing the words and music, also leads the very capable orchestra and acts efficiently as orchestra leader, while his collaborator, Noble Sissle, has a role in the production.

The liveliest moments occurred during a burlesque boxing bout, which was funny enough to be classed with Weber and Field's famous scenes.

The feminine portion of the organization vary in color from real negro to the palest of mulattoes. They danced and sang with unfailing zest, and the audience was liberal in its applause.

ONE CAN WHISTLE "SHUFFLE ALONG"

N Y C WORLD
MAY 23, 1921

Musical Melange With Negro Performers Has Tuneful Melodies Well Sung.

If you chance to be in the market for a new pre-breakfast whistling tune—the kind that will come to you without an effort—go to the 63d Street Theatre and see "Shuffle Along."

The Nikko Producing Company, Inc., after bringing together all of the available high class negro troupers now active in these parts, put them into a typical darktown show that is a cross between a minstrel, a shimmy contest and a Broadway musical comedy revue, and presented them for the first time last night. This was a private performance, the regular engagement beginning to-night for an indefinite run. It appeared, however, that all of New York's regular first night contingent was on hand in the little hall, and it is more than a safe wager that, all in all, they had as much real fun as they have had in many a moon.

"Shuffle Along" brings to Broadway at least three new song numbers that are laden with the stuff that pastes them in one's memory for keeps. It fills its tiny stage with a chorus of twisting, snapping, kicking, yelping, dancing negro girls who possess an agility that is the very next thing to startling. It has a prima donna who possesses a voice of unusual quality and range. And it is clean, perfectly clean, so much more purified, in fact, than the average New York musical show that one sits back in amazement at the accomplishment.

F. E. Miller and Aubrey Lyles, who wrote the book, haven't done much. There's a Dixieland town called Jimtown in which there are three opposing candidates for the mayoralty, with the comedy revolving about the manner in which these three gentlemen go about running their race.

But when Miss Lottie Gee, the prima donna, walks into that spotlight and sings "Love Will Find a Way," the giggling ends. Silence comes. It is a pretty song, exquisitely rendered. The chorus, in its little bit, works with a click-click-click that suggests the London Palace Girls of "Tip Top." The direction, handled by Walter Brooks, is splendid.

A song called "Bandanna Days," sung by Arthur Porter and the ensemble, is another fine piece, and "Everything Reminds Me of You," in which Gee has the leading role, is rare song writing. The music has been written by Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, of the cast.

There are a dozen other songs of merit, including "Honeysuckle Time," "Shuffle Along," "I Am Craving for That Kind of Love," "Oriental Blues" and "If You Haven't Been Vamped by a Brownskin, You Haven't Been Vamped At All."

This "melange," as it is billed takes its place worthily in Broadway's musical offerings for the summer months. It is novel, crude in places, at times apparently just on the verge of tumbling down. But it gives us negro harmony and melody in its rawest and therefore its most enchanting state.

N. Y. C. MAIL
MAY 24, 1921

"SHUFFLE ALONG"

Lively Show at Sixty-third Street Theatre, With All-Negro Cast.

JAZZ is the predominant note in "Shuffle Along," a musical comedy written, staged and played entirely by negroes, which was revealed at the Sixty-third street music hall last night.

The score was written by Eubie Blake and the lyrics by Noble Sissle, both of whom have temporarily deserted the vaudeville stage to take part in the production. F. E. Miller and Aubrey Lyles, another vaudeville team, are also credited with having contributed to the libretto.

What little story there is is concerned with the election of a mayor in a small town and provides several amusing situations. The principal asset of the new entertainment, however, is the dancing and the jazz numbers, that are well done, considering the limited possibilities of the stage. Some of the comedy scenes are effective, principally one in which Miller and Lyles engage in a fist fight set to music.

Lottie Gee made a vivacious heroine and the dark-complexioned chorus was exceptionally well drilled.

The New Plays

Colored Stars in 63d St.

"Shuffle Along," Something of a Novelty in the Musical Comedy Line, Presented by a Negro Company.

By BURNS MANTLE

N. Y. C. MAIL
MAY 26, 1921

CAST OF CHARACTERS

At the Piano	Eubie Blake	Tom Sharper	Noble Sissle
Jim Williams	Paul Floyd	Steve Jenkins	F. E. Miller
Jessie Williams	Lottie Gee	Sam Peck	Aubrey Lyles
Ruth Little	Gertrude Saunders	Jack Penrose	Lawrence Deas
Harry Walton	Roger Matthews	Rufus Loose	C. Wesley Hill
Board of Aldermen	Richard Cooper, Arthur Porter, Arthur Woodson, Snippy Mason	Soakum Flat	A. E. Baldwin
		Strutt	Billy Williams
		Uncle Tom	Charles Davis
		Old Black Joe	Bob Williams
Mrs. Sam Peck	Mattie Wilks	Secretary to Mayor	Ina Duncan

THE colored performer is a natural entertainer. He can always sing, he can usually dance, and frequently he is a natural comedian. But of late years he has been given little opportunity to exercise his talent. In the old days he frequently found a place in a minstrel show. Later, when the William and Walker company was organized, he was able to compete in the popular priced theatres with his white brothers, who imitated him more frequently than he imitated them. But since "Buddie" Walker passed out and Bert Williams joined the "Follies," he has been forced into the small time vaudeville theatres or compelled to give up his career.

NOW John Cort's son, Harry, has organized a new colored musical comedy company that will give the colored brother, and also the colored sister, a chance. By way of introducing them he has gathered together a troupe of fifty and is presenting them at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall in a "musical melange" called "Shuffle Along." The book and lyrics were written by one dark skinned team of vaudevillians, Miller and Lyles, and the music by another pair, Sissle and Blake, the latter a gifted ragtime pianist.

The principal female roles are played by two light mahogany ladies who have had considerable stage experience, Lottie Gee, a good soprano, and Gertrude Saunders, a reedy-voiced soubrette with an extensive repertoire of "blues" numbers.

The entertainment is interesting as a novelty, the song numbers are full of melody and everybody dances. The comedy interludes are characteristic and also quite as original as any the average Broadway musical show reveals, a sort of colored Potash and Perlmutter sketch, in which Miller and Lyles figure, being most amusing. Last night we found a noisily appreciative audience demanding many encores because it enjoyed the songs, and not, as is the case in most Broadway theatres, because there was a callous-handed clique of professional song writers present.

Having an evening to fill, and being interested in musical comedy novelties, you will probably find these "jazz jasmines," "happy honeysuckles," "syncopating sunflowers" and "majestic magnolias" worth while.

ENTHUSIASM

Billboard
6-4-21

Is Feature of Two New Shows

"Shuffle Along" and "Sunkist" Possess It In Abundance, and It Wins Their Audiences

Last week brought two musical comedies to New York, and both of them had a feature in common which is seen only too seldom in this form of entertainment. The companies are "Shuffle Along," at the Sixty-third Street Theater, and "Sunkist," at the Globe. The first is an all-Negro company, and the latter hails from California. The feature which they have in common is that of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm in their singing, dancing, acting and ensemble work.

It is a pleasure to see a company of people who are enjoying their work. It is infectious. The audience responds to it like magic and are apt to put enthusiasm into their applause in direct ratio to the measure of it exhibited on the other side of the footlight trough.

Enthusiasm betokens youth, vivacity and the joy of living. These are the backbone of musical comedy. No one ever saw an intentionally lugubrious musical show. It might have been so unintentionally, but "with malice prepense and aforethought"—never.

The enthusiasm displayed by the two companies mentioned was commented on by every reviewer. To the writer this means only one thing. That is, it is a novelty. If all companies were full of the same kind of [illegible]

(over)

(From Over)

distinguishes these plays, not a solitary critic would have remarked on it. It would have been no novelty. The absence of it would then have come in for comment had it been absent.

There is nothing that impresses an audience as does whole-hearted effort. It was the thing that made everybody sit up and take notice when the "Palace Girls" did a number in "Tip Top." Here were sixteen girls who went at their work with real attack and with the precision born of long training. They scored tremendously.

So it is with "Shuffle Along" and "Sunkist." Neither of these pieces is a wonderful production, but both are pleasing entertainment. The cause of this is just what we have been considering, and without it either or both might have fallen pretty flat. This is a matter which comes right home to the player. It is he or she who is to project an enthusiastic attitude over the footlights, and it is he or she who is going to reap the immediate benefit. There is nothing that will sooner bring results from a house and there is nothing easier to get—when one has the will to do it.—G. W.

N Y C TIMES
AUGUST 21, 1921

The success of "Shuffle Along" at the Sixty-third Street Theatre has led other impresarios to believe that another all-negro musical entertainment might also prove profitable, particularly if presented a bit nearer the theatrical centre. Thus "Put and Take," which had its premiere last night at the hospitable Town Hall. Should this one also prove successful, the procession will probably begin.

SHUFFLE ALONG AND THE CRITICS

IT IS extremely difficult to satisfy this many furious and contradictory white man. Here we have a Broadway production that has been playing for nine months to crowded houses with no sign of the end yet in sight, while some of the critics are having spasms because there is so little of the old-time "darky minstrel" stuff in the repertoire of this very excellent show. One writer in the Liberator, an organ devoted to progressive and some think radical ideas, complains because there are no black chorus girls in the show. He thinks that the Colored showman is partial to light complexioned chorus girls. Maybe so and maybe not. We do know that one of the song hits of the show has something to say about "If you haven't been vamped by a brownskin, you haven't been vamped at all." We agree, and judging from the applause we heard it seemed to us as though there were a number of like minded folks in the audience the night we had the privilege of seeing the performance. We have a suspicion that the producers were very acutely aware of the fact that the box office would have to show results and that some of their personal likes and dislikes would have to be shelved. If the reports are true of the difficulties experienced by the management with stage door "Johnnies," who are not black, we are inclined to think that the producers got the color scheme right for gathering in the shekels from Broadway. The early scenes in our humble judgment are concessions enough to the traditional notions of what blackface comedy ought to be. For our part from the entrance of the Silk-Hatted Four Harmony Kings in their beautifully fitted evening clothes to the final scene where the chorus are given some real clothes to wear we felt better and better as the performance progressed. Educating these white folks is certainly one long, tiresome job. Even a critic ought to know that Flo Ziegfeld sets the standard of what a chorus girl shall be like. Even black-haired girls are not very numerous in a Follies chorus.

"Shuffle Along" Still Going Strong At 63rd St. Music Hall

N.Y. Age 11/12/21

"Shuffle Along," the all-Negro Musical Melange, enters upon its twenty-sixth big week at the 63rd Street Music Hall on Monday night. This is the record run for a colored attraction. With its humorous book and scintillating tunes "Shuffle Along" is attracting capacity audiences at every performance and present business points to a long and prosperous run at the uptown playhouse. The same big cast remains intact, including Miller and Lyles, authors of the book, and Sissle and Blake, composers of the lyrics and music.

Lottie Gee, Florence Mills, Davis and Williams, Mattie Wilkes, Adelaide Hall, Richard Cooper, Snippy Mason, Arthur Porter, James Woodson, and the Four Harmony Kings make up the large cast.

New costumes have been added to "Shuffle Along" and each week will see the girls dressed in the latest fashions. The usual Wednesday midnight performances will be given at 11.45. Matinees on Saturday. Evenings at 8:20.

Theatrical – 1921.
Troupes, Individual –

White Writer Objects to Colored Performers Appearing in Full Dress

The New York Age 9/17/21

(BY LESTER A. WALTON)

SOMETIMES it is interesting, if not altogether agreeable, to learn what others think of us. For the benefit of colored Americans I am republishing in part the opinions of Jack Lait as to how colored performers should dress on the stage and what constitutes "darky" business.

These views appeared in a recent issue of *Variety* in a critique on "Put and Take," the latest colored musical show appearing at Town Hall.

In his dissertation Mr. Lait says:

"There is, throughout, too much effort to be 'dressed up' and dignified. Only at the very end does it become the novelty that it should be if it wants to survive at all and have any excuse for invading Times Square. Colored performers cannot vie with white ones, and colored producers cannot play within an apple's throw of Ziegfeld and try to compete with him. On 39th street another attraction flived the night before (The Mask of Hamlet) because Italians wanted to out-Americanize Americans. And here colored folks seemed to have set out to show the whites they are just as white as anybody. They may be as good, but they're different—and, in their entertainment, at any rate they should remain different—distinct—indigenous.

"A quartet hacked away in dress suits when it would have been a success in plantation jumpers, etc. The girls' wardrobe ran to tawdry gowns, and frocks when they should have been fancifully dressed as picks, Zulus, cannibals or cotton pickers. There wasn't enough true colored stuff in the show—until that finale.

After reading the above is it difficult to understand why some white people fail to regard the colored American seriously? Unless you go about in overalls and wearing a perpetual grin you are apt to create the impression of assuming too much dignity.

Mr. Lait, in his review, unconsciously reveals his true attitude toward the colored American in everyday life. Just because his color is not white an American ought to be DIFFERENT—act DIFFERENT!

Environment, schools and contact are influences to which an American is not supposed to be susceptible, if colored. Negro life in its truest sense must be represented by the plantation type, according to Mr. Lait.

Usually performers are costumed to be consistent with a scene, but such a policy does not meet with the approval of Jack Lait, who wants to see a quartet dressed in "plantation jumpers" because the singers happen to be Negroes.

Deacon Johnson, members of the Clef Club and other colored entertainers appear nightly on Fifth avenue, at Sherry's and the leading hotels in clothes befitting the occasion. Can you imagine them dressed according to Mr. Lait's way of thinking?

I hardly think Mr. Belasco would bring the four singers in question into a parlor or music room in overalls were he to stage "Put and Take."

So, in bemoaning the fact that "there wasn't enough *true colored stuff* in the show," Mr. Lait gives indisputable evidence of allowing his prejudice to get the better of his good judgment and technical stage knowledge when he writes: "The girls' wardrobe ran to tawry 'gowns' and frocks when they should have been fancifully dressed as picks, Zulus, cannibals or cotton pickers."

Mr. Lait seems to be imbued with the idea that white people have a copyright on wearing gowns, frocks and dress suits; that whenever a colored person dons these article of wearing apparel they are invading the sacred precincts of the Caucasian. Hence, the charge that "here colored folks seemed to have set out to show the whites they are just as white as anybody."

Just what knowledge Mr. Lait desires to impart when he says: "Colored performers cannot vie with white ones and colored producers cannot play within an apple's throw of Ziegfeld and try to compete with him" is too deep for me to fathom. Does he mean to infer that by wearing dress suits, gowns and frock instead of dressed or rather undressed as cannibals, members of "Put and Take" vie with white performers?

In referring to the girls wearing "tawdry gowns" all thoughts of the colored company competing with Ziegfeld's Follies should be dispelled, for everyone knows that the Ziegfeld production is the last word in lavish display of scenery and costumes.

Although the reviewer points out time and again that the finale is the only "colored stuff" in the show, he innocently tells of the many encores scored by the clever dancer, Maxie, of the riot occasioned by little Florence Parham, of the hit made by Cora Green in songs and the laughs put over by Emmett Anthony.

Friday evening of last week when I attended a performance of "Put and Take" at Town Hall, Tabor and Green, too, were a riot, (wearing evening clothes) as was George Braxton in his tumbling. Foxworth and Frances also scored heavily in their dancing and these specialties were put on long before the finale. Whether Mr. Lait personally thinks they were rank infringements on the efforts of white performers is one thing, but, nevertheless, the public evinced appreciatio in no uncertain manner.

The colored orchestra, under the direction of Tim Brymm, is another feature in "Put and Take," but as the colored musicians wear Tuxedo coats instead of jumpers, doubtless the ire of the reviewer was aroused to such an extent that he refused to make reference to the good music played in the pit.

The opinions aired by Mr. Lait are typical of views given on Broadway relative to what colored performers should and should not do on the stage. Largely for this reason colored acts do very little "shining" in vaudeville nowadays. The public sets up the cry of too much sameness. But what are you going to do when the average manager or booking agent entertains similar views as Jack Lait?

In commenting at length on Mr. Lait's opinions as to what colored performers should wear on the stage, etc., it must not be overlooked by readers of THE AGE that the criticisms merely express the views of an individual and not *Variety*. Mr. Silverman, publisher of *Variety*, is broadminded and enjoys a reputation for fair play.

Quite a number of criticisms made by Jack Lait are well taken, but he certainly "falls off his horse" and shows himself utterably incompetent to write as an authority on "true colored stuff."

Plantation scenes are acceptable and enjoyable at times, as are Zulus, cannibals and cotton pickers. But the scenes and types to which Mr. Lait objects in "Put and Take" are just as much a part of Negro life as plantation characters. Of cannibals and Zulus we know nothing except from hearsay.

Now and then a white writer almost has a fit of hydrophobia because some colored performer "seeks to imitate white folks." As a mater of fact white actors are always trying to imitate colored folks.

Bert Williams ought to vigorously complain of the Al Jolsons, Frank Tinneys and other white comedians using cork. Then there are some white acts in vaudeville appearing in brown face.

Just let something on the order of the shimmy be introduced by colored people and all the cabarets in Harlem will be invaded by white actors and actresses until the new movement has been perfected and put on downtown. Parts of "Shuffle Along" already have been confiscated by white performers for their personal use, and "Put and Take" will suffer a similar fate if it remains on Broadway any length of time.

So with white comedians doing blackface, white performers making up as high yellows and tantalizing browns, white men appearing as Negro minstrels and white women making reputations as singers of what are commonly known as "coon songs," it is about time for colored writers to take compassion on those so completely wrapped up in their self-conceit plus selfishness and emancipate them for the absurd notions they unfortunately entertain about full-fledged Americans and American customs.

SHALL THIS OFFER BE UNNOTICED?

New York Age ?

By Mrs. Noah D. Thompson

Realizing what the drama can do towards solving the race problem, the Reverend Doctor Howard, a Colored minister of New York City, is advocating a closer co-operation between the church and the stage. That he is wide-awake and progressive goes without saying. That he may be the means of influencing the members of his profession to a like way of thinking is the earnest prayer of those who are interested in the welfare of the Negro.

For the theater was, and will always be, in the hands of real artists, an adjunct to the church. Created by dreamers, bent on bringing home to the audience truths in the most vital way, the stage can be made far more effective than the pulpit. For the preacher, however great his eloquence, can only relate and illustrate a truth; but actors can embody it, making it live and breathe and speak its own message.

All through the history of man, we find he has ever enjoyed a story. Hence the crowds that gathered about Jesus, and the crowds that still gather about the speaker who has a wealth of stories at his command. But the teller of stories must depend upon the imagination of his audience to make vivid the pictures that he draws. The theater goes far beyond the mere tale-teller in that it places the story in its own setting, in a picture so painted as to bring out many of the most vital points of the tale. For this reason all classes of men in every land spend their earnings for a seat in the theater. If the play given is wholesome, they go away refreshed, lifted up, thoughtful, their viewpoint often changed toward their own problems and those of their neighbors.

Because all men go to the theater, reformers see what a wonderful place the stage is to lay the grievances of the oppressed before the world, sugar-coated in the form of a story. The stage can be made a great Peace-Table where the problems of the world may be diplomatically laid out. If villifiers and prejudiced historians tell the world that the Negro is a cannibal in his own country and a criminal in this, we should go to the stage with a Negro drama enacted by skilled, well-trained Negro players and prove in a human interest story, that we have been misrepresented. Art has ever done much to solve the problems of the oppressed. Because the progressive Rev. Howard sees the possibility of Negro players to combat the wrongs of their race, does he advocate a closer co-operation between the stage and the church, since the church puts its stamp of approval or disapproval upon the amusements enjoyed by a large percentage of the Colored race.

Realizing also the possibility of the Negro drama, I have formed a stock company of Colored players to be known as the Momolu Players for the putting on of Negro plays exclusively. If all things are propitious, their first production will be given in December of this year. These Momolu Players were addressed a few nights ago by Attorney E. Burton Ceruti, much interested in the formation of a professional company of players like the famous Lafayette Players of the East. Mr. Ceruti's advice to these earnest young actors was of the kind to inspire while it enlightened them as to the great responsibility of the Colored actor in setting before the people of other races their claims to the rights and privileges of men. He closed by informing them that a white philanthropist awake to the importance of the theater, was ready to contribute a goodly sum towards the erection of a Negro Playhouse in this city, IF (that pivot in the wheel of the Negro's progress)—IF a company of Negro players can be found interested enough in their own future and in the future of their Race to "stick" to the profession. This philanthropist, let it be understood, has no thought of ostracizing the Negro in a theater of his own; but since the Negro is perhaps the greatest potential artist in America today, he would, undoubtedly, like to see him given the oppor-

tunity to develop along his own lines in his own theater where other races would certainly flock, if Negroes could be trained to "deliver the goods." Therefore, it is up to the Colored actors of Los Angeles to take or reject this wonderful opportunity.

For the benefit of those interested I take this opportunity to state tha the proceeds of every dramatic pro ducition to be given in the future w be divided among the Momolu Pla ers after the expenses have been d ducted. All would be aspirants the actor's profession, determined stick through thick and through t will kindly communicate with calling up South 1651, at my res 1711 East Fifty-fifth street soon I will give the name "stickers" among the Mom

Incomplete

BRILLIANT GATHERING AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Baltimore Md. Herald 12/11/21

The Howard Players gave a special presentation of the one-act play Simon, the Cyrenian, written by Ridgley Torrence, on Monday evening, December 12th, in the Rankin Memorial Chapel on the University Campus in honor of the delegates to the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments. The players were assisted by the Howard University Glee Club in song recital.

The presentation of the play was a wonderful piece of art. The scenery was beautiful and the playing talented and impressive. The audience was made up of, possibly, the most brilliant group that has ever gathered for a purpose of this kind in the history of our country. Some of those present from the Armament Conference were the Hon. Victor Hoo, Chinese minister to Cuba; H. W. M. Nevison, noted English publicist; Mrs. Yasushi Taji, Senator Pearce of Australia; M. Eieyes, representing the French ministry, who was accompanied by M. De Lanux and M. Sanches; Lieut.-Commander Taku of the Imperial Japanese Navy; L. Stoddard Taylor, manager of the Shubert-Garrick; Mrs. Borden Harriman, Mrs. Stephen Elkins, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont; Dr. Bedrick Stepanzk of Czecho Slovakia; H. G. Wells, the greatest living English writer; Sir Hubert Llewllyn Smith of England representing the British Ministry and a host of other foreigners and distinguished Americans.

Mr. Nathaniel Dett was present from Hampton to play his own composition "The Juba Dance," which was interpreted in dancing by Miss Ottie Graham, Mr. Harry T. Burleigh our great composer of New York was also present.

Mr. Montgomery Gregory is director of the Department of Dramatic Art at Howard, which presented the play and invited the distuinguished visitors. Mrs. Marie Moore-Forrest is advisory drector, Cleon Throckmorton, technical director and Prof. Alain Locke in charge of dramatic composition. The Howard University Glee Glub was under the direction of Professor Roy W. Tibbs and the Associated Musicians of the Howard Players under the direction of Professor Beatrice Lewis.

American Artists Playing To Big Success—Stranded Colored Symphony Orchestra Aided—Cochran Presents "The Fun of the Fair"—More Trouble Over "Mecca"—"Heartbreak House" Opens

N Y C DRAMATIC MIRROR
NOVEMBER 12, 1921

MUCH appreciation from the British public has been given to the colored performers known as the Southern Syncopated Orchestra for the manly manner in which they met the week on their way from Scotland to Ireland. Their ship came into collision twice and finally sank, many of the poor fellows being drowned and the others proving themselves of vital worth in rescuing other passengers. Benefit shows were immediately put in hand to recoup them for their instruments, which were all lost, but far more valuable is the great opinion which every Britisher will have of these colored gentlemen.

Harry Green, who has been filling in with "The Cherry Tree," produced his "Welcome Stranger" this week at the Lyric, and made an immediate success with this story of an impecunious Jew who won the hearts of those Gentiles who persecuted him as far as they could, until his lovable nature overcame their opinions and proved him a man of ability who brought success to the one-eyed town. Harry's own personality will carry him through over here in anything as well written, and Aaron Hoffman's stuff is always that.

"The Fun of the Fair," which Charles Cochran at last showed this week at the London Pavilion, proved a more gorgeous affair than he even thought it would be. A trifle long at the opening night, it is full of splendor, and it is wonderful how such a small stage, comparatively, can accommodate such wonderful items. Parish and Peru, the jumping boys, at once jumped into favor in this and the Oxford "League of Notions" show, and the Dolly girls come into the last act also from the Oxford in their Pony Trot. Alfred Lester, the miserable one, has a good number in "Germs," and other successful British artists in it are Albert Bruno, Morris Harvey, and the little dancer, June. Trini, the Spanish dancer, is billed as the most beautiful woman in the world, and she tries to show it.

Oscar Asche is certainly a master of publicity. After causing endless discussion with his argument with the Lord Chamberlain as to the title of his production, he called "Mecca" "Cairo," and now he is answering further criticism in connection with the big undress scene, which all the English critics have described as an orgy of flesh. Be that as it may, the presentation of "Cairo" was received with cheer upon cheer, and, though it will not be the success that "Chu-Chin-Chow" was, it is bound to have a run. Oscar Asche, Lily Brayton, Courtice Pounds, and Frank Cochrane all have good parts, and the music is tunefully written by Percy Fletcher.

A new play by Bernard Shaw, called "Heartbreak House," was given a good send-off at the Court this week. It does not contain much action, but the dialogue is in G. B. S.'s best satirical vein, and the cast is exceptionally strong.

"A to Z," which is the title of Charlot's new show at the Prince of Wales', is a conglomeration of variety, of which one of the best is that of Laveen and Cross, with their comic acrobatic business. The Trix Sisters are the chief songsters, and Jack Buchanan does a light number well.

Paul Kay is the name of the man who saved "Abraham Lincoln." As it had to come off from the Lyceum to make way for Martin Harvey's "Only Way" revival, he is presenting "Lincoln" at the Scala, according to the press puffs, "for patriotic reasons."

Mercedes, the musical telepathist, was seen at the Victoria Palace this week, and has certainly caused a furore. Whatever the fake may be about this show, it is certainly one of the cleverest England has had from America, and Mercedes' bookings testify that truism that a good act from the States, even if originality is its only good point, must do good over here.

American Hebrew acts are doing well, too. Alex. Carr is in his second week at the Palladium with that old sketch of his, "Toplitsky." Other Hebrew shows include The Yiddish Players, Sherman, Busatt & Co. in a humorous sketch, "Matter o' Money," written by Israel Zangwill's brother, and Julian Rose, who is the most natural pattering Yid England has seen as yet. Julian Rose is such a strong favorite here that he has his home in this country.

FRANK J. WOOLF.

FOREWORD TO THE LIST OF COLORED THEATERS AND ATTRACTIONS

Bill board 8/6/21

The following lists have been compiled within the past six months from information obtained in many ways. Since there has been no previous effort to list either attractions or houses the task has been rather difficult. The Page is greatly indebted to M. C. Maxwell, former manager of the Liberty Theater, Alexandria, La.; to the T. O. B. A.; to the Comet Film Exchange of Philadelphia and to the Micheaux Pictures Corporation for their kindly co-operation in collecting the necessary information.

We make no pretense that the lists are complete, nor do we assure absolute freedom from inaccuracies. We do, however, present these results of painstaking effort with a view of serving the profession as much as is possible with the information at hand, and with the objective of encouraging additions and corrections that will make possible a complete and accurate tabulation of the theatrical interests of the group.

We ask in advance for your indulgence and apologize for such unintentional errors as may appear, and at the same time solicit your assistance in making the next listing more complete.

Owners, managers and artists alike will be performing a distinct service to themselves by filing addresses and descriptions of their interests with The Billboard, thus enabling us to properly answer the many professional inquiries that come to us in your interest.

List of theaters dependent upon colored patronage, either owned by or operated for the race, with Negro population of cities where 1920 census reports were available, character of ownership and type of house, so far as has been ascertained:

(Key—W means white; O means ownership; C means colored; M means management; V means plays vaudeville or road shows; E means equipped for shows, but operated at present with pictures only; P means pictures only; D means drama.

ALABAMA—NEGRO POPULATION, 900,652; WHITE, 1,447,032

City.	Negro Population.	Theater. Type.	Owner or Manager.	Address.	Remarks.
Anniston		New Queen—V			W.O.&M.
Bessemer		New Dixie—P	W. J. Lovejoy		W.O.&M.
Bessemer		Fairlyand—V			
Birmingham	70,217	Champion—P	P. A. Engler, 1714 Fourth Av.		W
Birmingham	70,217	Frolic—P	P. A. Engler, 1714 Fourth Av.		W
Birmingham	70,217	Queen—V	W. Savage		W.O.&M.
Birmingham	70,217	Gay—V	H. J. Hury		W.O.&M.
Decatur		Sykes—E	Mr. Sykes		C.O.&M.
Florence		Wilson Dam—P			W.O.&M.
Florence		Bessie—P	Mrs. Bessie Foster		C.O.&M.
Gadsden		Queen—P	J. Elson		W.O.&M.
Huntsville		Photo—P			W.O.&C.M.
Mobile	29,603	Gayety—P			W.O.&C.M.
Mobile		Pike—V	C. C. Schreiner		W.O.&M.
Montgomery	19,826	Pekin—P	S. Baum		W.O.&C.M.
Montgomery	19,826	Majestic—V	M. Barkett		W.O.&M.
Sheffield		Fields—E	Elijah Fields		C.O.&M.
Talladega		Liberty—P			W.O.&M.
Troy		Dreamland—P			W.O.&M.

ARKANSAS—NEGRO POPULATION, 472,220; WHITE, 1,270,757

Arkadelphia		West End—P	M. C. Smith, P. O. Box, 205		
Fort Smith		?—P			
Helena		Plaza—P	Mrs. E. A. Miller, 120 Walnut		C.O.&M.
Hope		Community—P	A. E. Rankin		
Hot Springs		?—P			C.O.&M.
Little Rock	17,474	Plaza—V	M. A. Lightman, Comm. Bldg.		W.M.
Malvern		Dixe—P	Virgil Calhoun, 401 E. First St.		
Prescott		Community—P	E. A. Rankin		
Stuttgart		Interstate—P	G. F. Bowen, N. Maple St.		
Texarkana		Not yet named	Jas. S. Douglas, 1311 Laurel		C.O.&M.
Texarkana		Community—P	A. E. Rankin		

DELAWARE—NEGRO POPULATION, 30,355; WHITE, 192,615.

Wilmington		National—E	John Hopkins, French St.		C.O.&M.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA—NEGRO POPULATION, 109,976; WHITE, 326,854

Washington	109,976	Hiawatha—P	Murray & Byas		
Washington	109,976	Howard—V	Thomas Bros., Seventh and T. N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Dunbar—P	Mr. Byas, Mrg., Seventh and T. N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Dudley—V	S. H. Dudley, 1223 Seventh N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Foraker—V	Murray & Byas, 1223 Seventh N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Mid-City—V	S. H. Dudley, 1223 Seventh N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Blue Mouse—V	M. Martin, Twenty-sixth and M.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Gem—P	F. H. Hable, Seventh and L. St. N. W.		W.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Dixie—P	Four and One-Half St. S. W.		W.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Florida—P	Mr. Colfax, Fifteenth and H St. N. W.		C.O.&M.
Washington	109,976	Republic—P	Walter Craddock, 1134 U St. N. W.		W.O.&C.M.

FLORIDA—NEGRO POPULATION, 329,487; WHITE, 968,153

Bartow		Picture—P			C.O.&M.
Daytona		?—E			C.O.&M.
Jacksonville		Frolic—P	Gus Sligman		W.O.&M.
Jacksonville		Austin—V	Mr. Buddy Austin		C.O.&M.
Jacksonville		Strand—V	Wm. S. Stiles		W.O.&M.
Orlando		?—P			W.O.&M.
Pensacola		Lincoln—P			C.O.&M.
Pensacola		Belmont—V	E. L. Cummings, 107 N. Baylen		W.O.
Petersburg		Dream—E	Jack Lively, 403 Ninth St.		
St. Augustine		?—E			
Tampa		Maceo—P	C. A. Sappel, 1310 Central		
Tampa		Palace—V			

GEORGIA—NEGRO POPULATION, 1,206,365; WHITE, 1,589,114

Augusta		Lenox—V	J. A. Moffett, 1128 N. Ninth		
Augusta		Palace—V	James Patterson		
Athens		Morton—V			
Atlanta		Auditorium—E	S. L. Lockett, 192 Auburn		C.
Atlanta		"91"—V	Chas. P. Bailey, 91 Decatur		W.O.
Atlanta		"81"—V	Chas. P. Bailey, 81 Decatur		W.O.&M.
Atlanta					
Brunswick		Pekin—V			C.O.&M.
Columbus		Dream—V	G. S. Love		W.O.&M.
Gainesville		Rex—P	G. M. Morgan		
Macon	23,098	Old Douglas—V	C. H. Douglas		C.O.&M.
Macon	23,098	New Douglas—V	C. H. Douglas		C.O.&M.
Savannah		Pekin—V	A. G. Monroe		C.O.&M.
Savannah		Star—P	A. S. Guggenheimer		
Savannah		Globe—P	A. S. Guggenheimer		
Savannah		Dunbar—E	Walter Scott, Pres., 468 W. Broad		C.O.&M.
Valdosta		?—P			C.O.&M.
Waycross		Star—V	H. A. Bunts, P. O. Box 201		C.O.&M.

ILLINOIS—NEGRO POPULATION, 182,254; WHITE, 690,329

Cairo		Standard—P	L. B. Curtis		
Chicago		Grand—V	Mr. Johnson, Mgr., 31st and State		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Avenue—V	Louis Weinberg, 31st and Indiana		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Franklin—P	328 E. 31st St.		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Lincoln—P			
Chicago		Phoenix—P	Frank Hammond, 31st and State		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Pickford—P	O. C. Hammond, 35th and Michigan		
Chicago		Vendome—P	John Hammond		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Adelphia—P	Sam Good, 31st and Prairie		W.O.&M.
Chicago		Atlas—P.&V.	Mr. Dooley, 4711 State (split week)		
Chicago		Owl—P	Mr. Saulkins, 47th and State		
Chicago		Monogram—V	Mr. H. B. Miller, 35th and State		W.O.&M.
Chicago		States—P	Mr. Paul, 35th and State		
Chicago		Blue Bird—P	W. C. Gates & Son, 3115 Indiana		C.O.&M.
Chicago		Western—P	S. L. Owens, 2211 Lake		C.O.&M.
Chicago		Lake—P	King & Davis, 3125 Cottage Grove		
East St. Louis		Olympic—P	M. L. Hawkins, 11 Main St.		C.O.&M.
Ewardsville		Liberty—P	J. H. Sylvester		
Mounds					
Springfield		Pekin—P	James Mason		

INDIANA—NEGRO POPULATION, 80,810; WHITE, 2,939,9

Indianapolis		Washington—V	E. S. Stone		C.O.&M.
Indianapolis		Pioneer—P	Mrs. Anna Bowman, 515 Indiana		
Indianapolis		Indiana—E	Dr. O. Puryear, 414 Indiana		C.O.&M.
Indianapolis		Columbia—P	Bert Zarrigg		
Indianapolis		Senate—V	James Hill, 1329 N. Senate		
Indianapolis		Dunick—V	J. Nicholson, 1320 E. Sixteenth		W.O.&M.
Gary	6,200	Strand—V	Walter Smith, 1631 Broadway		

IOWA—NEGRO POPULATION, 19,005; WHITE, 2,200,191

City.	Negro Population.	Theater. Type.	Owner or Manager.	Address.	Remarks.
Des Moines		Lincoln—P	Earl Banks, 788 Twelfth St.		

KENTUCKY—NEGRO POPULATION, 235,988; WHITE, 2,180,560

Louisville		Lincoln—V	F. C. Dillon, 914 W. Walnut		C.M.
Louisville		Victory—V	Steven Bell		C.M.
Louisville		Palace—V	Mrs. Minnie McAfee, Eleventh and Walnut		C.M.
Mayfield		Unique—P	H. C. Nelle		
Paducah		Hiawatha—P	Dr. S. George		C.O.&M.
Henderson		Doxey—P	F. B. Doxey, 210 Elm St.		
Winchester		Lincoln—P	Mrs. Curry		

LOUISIANA—NEGRO POPULATION, 700,257; WHITE, 1,056,511

Alexandria		Grand—V	Saenger Amusement Co.		W.O.&C.M.
Baton Rouge		Grand—P			W.O.&M.
Homer		?—P			C.O.&M.
Lake Charles		Boulevard—P	S. B. Mancusco		
Monroe		Dreamland—P			W.O.&M.
New Orleans	100,930	L. K. Mitchell—P	Luther K. Mitchell		C.O.&M.
New Orleans	100,930	Bordeaux—P	Bordeaux and Camp		C.O.&M.
New Orleans	100,930	Lincoln—P	Howard and Louisiana		
New Orleans	100,930	Iroquois—V	G. Ford, 413 Rampart		W.O.&C.M.
New Orleans	100,930	Lyric—V	Beaudreaux & Bennett, Bergundy & Iberville		W.O.
New Orleans	100,930	Pythian Temple	K. of P. Lodge		C.O.&M.
		?—P			C.O.&M.
Shreveport		Star—V	Mr. Gordon, 1045 Texas Av.		W.O.&M.
Shreveport		Hippodrome—V			W.O.&M.

MARYLAND—NEGRO POPULATION, 244,749; WHITE, 1,304,737

Annapolis		Clay St.—P	John Costi		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Dunbar—P	Josiah Diggs, 619 N. Central Av.		C.O.&M.
Baltimore		Rainbow—P	B. Sachs, 2115 Pennsylvania Av.		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Regent—V	M. Hornstein, 1619 Pennsylvania Av.		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		American—P	A. Rosen, 925 Pennsylvania Av.		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Gilmore—P	Oscar Schien, Gilmore and Saratoga		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Goldfield—P	J. L. Rome, 913 Warner		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Carey—P	James Cremen, Carey and Prestman		
Baltimore		Lincoln—V	M. Flacks, 936 Pennsylvania Av.		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Star—V	Monument Bond		W.O.&M.
Baltimore		Roosevelt—P	Jacob Friedlander, Biddle and Druid Hill		W.O.&M.

MICHIGAN—NEGRO POPULATION, 60,082; WHITE, 3,001,627

Detroit		Vaudette—V	E. B. Dudley, Gratiot Av.		C.O.&M.
Detroit		Koppin—V	Henry S. Koppin, Gratiot Av.		W.O.&M.
Detroit		Shook—V	Ben Shook, 2814 Hastings		C.O.&M.
Detroit		?—E	2201 St. Aubin		?

MISSISSIPPI—NEGRO POPULATION, 935,184; WHITE, 853,182

Clarksdale		Queen—P			W.O.&M.
Jackson		Alamo—P	R. A. Bell		W.O.&M.
Laurel		Savoy—V	Thos. Armstead, 428 Front		
Meridian		?—P			W.O.&M.
Meridian		Alamo—P			W.O.&M.
Mound Bayou		Casino—P	Fred Miller (Negro City)		C.O.&M.
Vicksburg		P			W.O.&M.

MISSOURI—NEGRO POPULATION, 178,241; WHITE, 3,325,944

Kansas City	30,706	Columbia—P	J. W. Koupolis, Independence St.		W.O.&M.
Kansas City	30,706	Lincoln—V	L. Goldman, office 807 Main st.		W.O.&M.
Kansas City	30,706	Loves—P	G. W. K. Love, 24th and Vine		
Kansas City	30,706	Panama—P	Twelfth and Woodland		
Kansas City	30,706	Tent—V	Billy Kling, Eighteenth and Lydia		
Kansas City	30,706	Lyric—V	Billy Kling		
St. Joseph		Dudley—P	Chas. T. Phelps, 211 N. Second		C.O.&M.
St. Louis		Assembly Hall	Richard Barrett (ready Sept. 1)		Mixed
St. Louis		Star—P	Chris. Eftgian, Jefferson St.		W.O.&M.
St. Louis		Jesse Mere—P	C. Pitman		
St. Louis		Movie—P	Tom James		
St. Louis		Criterion—P	Thomas James		
St. Louis		Pendleton—?	B. F. Austin, 4164 W. Finney		
St. Louis		B. T. Wash'ton—V	C. H. Turpin, Market St.		C.O.&M.
Springfield		Palace—P	H. L. Horne, 325 Booneville St.		

NEBRASKA—NEGRO POPULATION, 15,242; WHITE, 1,179,129

Omaha		Loyal—P	Walker & Dorsey		
Omaha		Diamond—P	Mrs. Peterson		

NEW JERSEY—NEGRO POPULATION, 117,132; WHITE, 3,037,087

Asbury Park		Royal—V	Mr. Fletcher		
Newark	17,010	Metropolitan—V	Mr. Ross		W.O.C.M.

NEW YORK—NEGRO POPULATION, 198,433; WHITE, 8,906,845

N. Y. City		Lafayette—V.&D.	Lester Walton, Mgr., 131st and 7th Av.		C.O.M.
N. Y. City		Renaissance—P	Roach, H. C., Co., 137th and 7th Av.		C.O.M.
N. Y. City		Lincoln—V	Mrs. Downs, 135th and Lenox		W.O.&M.
N. Y. City		Franklin—P	Peter Eckert, 133rd and Lenox		W.O.&C.M.
N. Y. City		Crescent—P	Eugene Elmore, 42 W. 135th St.		W.O.&M.
N. Y. City		Roosevelt—P	Mr. Sovini, 145th and 7th Av.		W.O.M.
N. Y. City		Douglas—P	Mr. Sovini, 145rd and Lenox		W.O.M.

NORTH CAROLINA—NEGRO POPULATION, 763,407; WHITE, 1,783,779

Asheville		Star—P			W.O.&M.
Baden		Dreamland—V	W. T. Edding		W.O.&M.
Charlotte		Palace—P			W.O.&M.
Concord		Alpine—V			C.O.&M.
Durham		Wonderland—P	F. K. Watkins		
Durham		Rex—V	F. K. Watkins		C.O.&M.
Goldsboro		Picture—P			
Greenville		?—E			W.O.&M.
Kingston		?—P			W.O.&M.
L. Washington		?—P			W.O.&M.
New Bern		?—P			C.O.&M.
Oxford		Casino—P	C. L. Jones		
Raleigh		Royal—P	W. T. Jomn, 117 E. Hargett		
Winston-Sal'm		Lafayette—V	W. S. Scales		C.O.&M.
Winston-Sal'm		Dunbar—V	R. A. Botton		W.O.&M.
Winston-Sal'm		Rex—P	M. Merriwether		
Wilson		?—E			C.O.&M.
Wilmington		Brooklyn—V			W.O.&M.

OHIO—NEGRO POPULATION, [illegible]; WHITE, 5,571,594

Cincinnati		Lyceum—V	Lew Henry, Mgr.		W.O.&C.M.
Cincinnati		Lincoln—E	Lew Henry, Mgr.		W.O.&C.M.
Cincinnati		Pekin—P	Oscar Hawkins		C.O.&M.
Cleveland		Temple—P	M. Bolaney, 50th and Central		W.O.&M.
Cleveland		Grand Central—V	Mr. Kaplan, Owner; O. T. Harris, Mgr.		W.O.&C.M.
Columbus		Empress—E	J. A. Jackson, 1287 Mt. Vernon		C.O.&M.
Columbus	20,091	Dunbar—V	J. A. Jackson, 1287 Mt. Vernon		C.O.&M.
Dayton	9,029	Midget—P	R. C. Krapf		
Portsmouth		Lincoln—P	W. F. McConnell		
Xenia		Orpheum—P	A. L. Binder		

OKLAHOMA—NEGRO POPULATION, 149,407; WHITE, [illegible]

Theatrical—1921. Troupes, Individual. General

Ardmore		P	Tobe Crisp	C.O.&M.
Chickasha		Pastime—P	William Johnson	
Hugo		Lincoln—P	J. Townsend	
Muskogee		Dreamland—V	Mrs. L. T. Williams	C.O.&M.
Oklahoma City		Temple—P	J. J. Dawson	
Oklahoma City		Aldridge—V	Beaux & Whitlow	C.O.&M.
Okmulgee	3,372	Dreamland—V	Mrs. L. T. Williams	C.O.&M.
Sapulpa		George R.—P	S. L. James, 520 W. Johnston St.	
*Tulsa		Dreamland—V	Mrs. Williams	C.O.&M.

*Theater destroyed during riot and population greatly diminished.

PENNSYLVANIA—NEGRO POPULATION, 284,494; WHITE, 8,433,735

Harrisburg		Princess—P	B. Shift, Sixth and Cumberland	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Dunbar—V.&D.	Grant Williams, Mgr.	C.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Standard—V	John T. Gibson, Owner	C.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Strand—P	H. Swartz, Twelfth and Girard	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Rex—P	D. Starkman, 2127 Ridge Av.	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Gladstone—P	M. B. Browsky, Seventeenth and Federal	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Keystone—P	Mr. Wack	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Royal—P	Mr. Wack	W.O.&M.
Philadelphia	134,098	Olympia—P	Mr. Swartzman, Broad and Bainbridge	W.O.&M.
Pittsburg		Pershing—C	(plays colored road shows)	W.O.&M.
Pittsburg		Star—V	Harry Tannenbaum, Wylie Av.	W.O.&C.M.
Pittsburg		?—V	Center Av.	C.O.&M.
Steelton		Palace—P	C. L. Donley, 190 N. Front	

SOUTH CAROLINA—NEGRO POPULATION, 864,719; WHITE, 818,536

City.	Negro Population.	Theater Type.	Owner or Manager.	Address	Remarks.
Anderson		Grand—V	R. Sloan Driscoll		W.O.&M.
Bennettsville		Picture—C	King & Covington		C.O.&M.
Camden		?—P			C.O.&M.
Charleston		Columbia—E			
Charleston		Lincoln—V	J. C. V. Cannon, V.P.; C. P. McClane, Mgr.		C.O.&M.
Charleston		Milo—V			C.O.&M.
Charleston		Lincoln—V	C. P. McClane		C.O.&M.
Columbia		Lincoln—V	W. H. Tolbutt		W.O.&M.
Columbia		Royal—P	L. T. Lester		W.O.&M.
Florence		Princess—V	G. Brown		C.O.&M.
Greenwood		Bijou—P	Mr. Adams		
Greenville		Liberty—E	Wilson & Kurtz		W.O.&M.
Orangeburg		Palmetto—P	Mr. Brown		W.O.&M.
Rock Hill		Broadway—P	W. S. Alston		C.O.&M.
Sumter		?—E			C.O.&M.

TENNESSEE—NEGRO POPULATION, 451,758; WHITE, 1,885,993

Chattanooga	11,042	Grand—P	M. H. Silverman, Ninth St.	W.O.&M.
Chattanooga		Liberty—V	Sam Reevin, Prop., Ninth St.	W.O.&M.
Knoxville		Gem—P	W. C. Kennedy	
Knoxville		Dixie—P	Chas. Roth	
Memphis		Daisy—P	Joe Macire, 329 Beale Av.	
Memphis		Palace—V	A. Barnaso, 324 Beale Av.	W.O.&M.
Memphis		Venus—V	Paul Zarillo	
Memphis		Grand—P	Paul Zarillo	
Nashville		Lincoln—P		C.O.&M.
Nashville		Bijou V	Milton D. Starr	W.O.&M.
Nashville		Star—P		C.O.&M.

TEXAS—NEGRO POPULATION, 741,723; WHITE, 3,915,136

Austin		Dixie-Dale—P		
Beaumont		Verdun—P	A. N. Adams	C.O.&M.
Beaumont		Lincoln—V		W.O.&M.
Beaumont		Pastime—P		W.O.&M.
Beaumont		Lee's Tent—V	Ed Lee	C.O.&M.
Bonham		Star—P	Chas. Jordon	C.O.&M.
Bryan		Star—P	Queen & Baylor	
Clarksville		Princess—P	J. S. Thornton	
Dallas	24,023	Mammoth—P		W.O.&M.
Dallas	24,023	Park—V	Chintz Moore, Owner	C.O.&M.
Dallas	24,023	Grand Central—P	Jack Harris	
Denison		Dreamland—P	P. Woods	C.O.&M.
Paris		?—P		
Ft. Worth	15,896	Douglas—P	S. Lewis	
Ft. Worth	15,896	Washington—P		C.O.&M.
Galveston		Lincoln—V		C.O.&M.
Galveston		Dixie-3—P		W.O.&M.
Galveston		Princess—P	A. B. Mendell	W.O.&M.
Galveston		Star—P		W.O.&M.

Owner or Manager.	Address	Remarks.	City.	Negro Population.	Theater Type.
Greenville	Pastime—V				C.O.&M.
Hillsboro	Palace—P	H. D. Jackson			
Houston	Odin—P				W.O.&M.
Houston	Lincoln—P	O. P. DeWalt			C.O.&M.
Houston	Washington—V				W.O.&M.
Houston	American—V	C. A. Caffey			C.O.&M.
Marlin	?—P				
Morehead	Cozy—E	W. L. Hogan			
Orange	?—P				
Paris	Alhambra—V				C.O.&M.
Rusk	Queen—P	Ed. Conley			C.O.&M.
Port Arthur	Dream—P				W.O.&M.
San Antonio	American—E	Chas. Coffey, San Felipe St.			
San Antonio	Dreamland—V	A. N. Sack			W.O.&M.
Sherman	Andrews—E				C.O.&M.
Taylor	Rink—P	J. W. Lewis			
Temple	Rink—P	J. J. Dawson			C.O.&M.
Tyler	Longs—P				C.O.&M.
Wichita Falls	Victory—P	E. C. Lewis			
Waco	Majestic—?	M. L. Gardner			
Waco	Gayety—P	W. H. Leonard			

VIRGINIA—NEGRO POPULATION, 690,017; WHITE, 1,617,009

Alexandria	Virginia—P	B. Shapiro		
Alexandria	Lincoln—P	H. A. Bramlow		
Berkley	Liberty—V	M. C. Harksen		
Danville	Hippodrome—V	W. A. Dontevy		
Hampton	Lincoln—V	Mr. Bacchus		W.O.&M.
Hampton	Lyric—V	George C. Bacchus		W.O.&M.
Lynchburg	Empire—V	C. K. Smith		
Martinsville	Dubois—P	H. Ball		
Newport News	Lincoln—V	W. L. Mosely, 20th and Jefferson		
Norfolk	Attucks—V.&D.	Bob't Cross, Mgr., 1008 Church St.		C.O.&M.
Norfolk	Palace—V	Hoffheimer Corp.		W.O.&M.
Petersburg	Rialto—P	O. R. Johnson		
Petersburg	S. H. Dudley—V	S. H. Dudley		C.O.&M.
Portsmouth	Lincoln—P	John Mills	11,517	
Roanoke	Hampton—P	C. F. Tolliver	9,300	
Richmond	Hippodrome—V	Chas. Somma	54,041	W.O.&M.
Richmond	Rayo—V	Ray Hollenger	54,041	W.O.&M.
Richmond	Globe—P	Ray Hollenger	54,041	W.O.&M.

WEST VIRGINIA—NEGRO POPULATION, 86,345; WHITE, 1,377,250

Charleston	Armory (Plays Colored companies)			
Clarksburg	Kelly Miller School (Plays race films)			
Fairmont	Clark—V	V. E. Alexander		C.O.&M.

Picture houses, 156; houses playing vaudeville, drama or road show, 107; houses running pictures, equipped for road show or vaudeville, 22. Total, 285.

Owned and managed by Negroes, 38; owned and managed by Whites, 116; owned by mixed corporation, 1; owned by Whites, managed by Negroes, 9; ownership and management undetermined, 73.

THE LAFAYETTE PLAYERS

And Their Development of the Drama Among Negroes

By LESTER A. WALTON
General Manager Quality Amusement Company and For Ten Years Dramatic Critic of New York Age)

It is beginning to dawn on the American public that the Negro, in a none too distant future, is destined to command respectful attention and win favorable consideration in the realm of drama. In the past the theatergoer has visualized the Negro on the stage only in comedy, dance and song, and colored comedians have made enviable reputations as exponents of buffoonery; but today there is every indication that the Negro is soon to invade the legitimate field.

The pronounced success scored last season on Broadway by Charles S. Gilpin in "The Emperor Jones" did enough to bring the public to the realization that the time has come to regard the Negro as a dramatic potentiality.

The expression is often heard: "There is nothing new under the sun." This certainly is true as far as relating to the Negro in drama. For six years colored actors, namely, the Lafayette Players, have been appearing with great success in stock at the Lafayette Theater, Seventh avenue, between 131st and 132nd streets, New York. These performances have been attended by white theatrical managers and actors of note, who have had nothing but praise for the efforts of the colored artists.

Robert Hilliard expressed himself "especially pleased" and was in a complimentary mood after witnessing a performance by the Lafayette Players of "A Fool There Was," and so enthused was Miss Marjorie Rambeau at the close of the presentation of "Eyes of Youth" by the colored actors that she went back stage and uttered words of commendation with such earnestness that the Lafayette Players were as deeply impressed with Miss Rambeau's talk as she was with their acting. Sir Beerbohm Tree, the noted English actor, also has been a visitor to the Lafayette Theater to get an idea of what the colored American is doing for the stage. He, too, left Harlem profuse in encomiums as to the Negro's ability as an actor and entertainer.

It has been the mission of the Quality Amusement Corporation, owned and operated by colored Americans, to present the Lafayette Players during the season outside of New York. Companies also have been appearing with success in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., Chicago, Norfolk and Newport News. Baltimore, where the corporation is erecting a theater to cost nearly half a million dollars; Richmond, Pittsburg and Indianapolis are seen to be included in the Quality Circuit.

The Quality Amusement Corporation has been owned by colored capitalists since the summer of 1919, and Negroes of this country generally [illegible] at the Provincetown, the Selwyn and the Princess theaters, New York, acquired more publicity than ever before was bestowed on an actor in a single season, has been a Lafayette player.

Miss Anita Bush, a clever little artist, who was an enthusiastic pioneer in the dramatic field, was another.

Clarence E. Muse, now a director for a large motion film producing company, was another. The late Tom Brown was an early member of the company and was a finished character actor, measured by any standard. Walker Thompson played many leading parts while with the company. Lawrence Chenault graduated from the players to the motion picture field, leaving happy recollections with an audience that is glad to see him on his occasional return.

Abbie Mitchell is today as great a success in the London halls as she was with the players; She is a vocalist who can act. Charles Olden [illegible] and is, a finished actor, as is Mrs. Mattie [illegible]kes, now in the Broadway "Shuffle Along." In the present organizations are four groups of artists, some of whom exhibit all of the well-rounded artistry that marks the experienced professional.

Barrington Carter, who made a Broadway debut in the deservedly unfortunate "Goat Alley," is a Lafayette product. He was the redeeming feature of the show, according to critics.

Mrs. Chas. J. Anderson, Miss Cleo Desmond, Miss Evelyn Ellis and Miss Edna Thomas are four entirely different types of capable leading ladies.

Andrew Bishop, Babe Townsend, Arth. S. Simmons, J. Lawrence Criner and Sydney Kirkpatrick are leads whose names have box office value.

Inez Clough, Laura Bowman, Susie Sutton, Elizabeth Williams, Alice Gorgas and Elizabeth Jackson, of the present units, are meritorious delineators of character parts. Arthur Ray, Harry Plater, A. B. DeComithere, Lionel Monagas, Richard Gregg, H. L. Pryor and J. F. Mores are others. David K. Brisbane, a young and quietly serious Negro, is the assistant director who has successfully handled the multitude of details essential to the productions offered. Sam Craig, in charge of the stage, has probably built, with less assistance, more stage effects than have many stage managers better known to fame.

While the Lafayette Theater is known as "the home of the Lafayette" to players, the Dunbar Theater, Philadelphia, which was opened in January, 1920, and created at a cost of over $400,000, is the largest house on the circuit. It is one of the finest houses in the Quaker City.

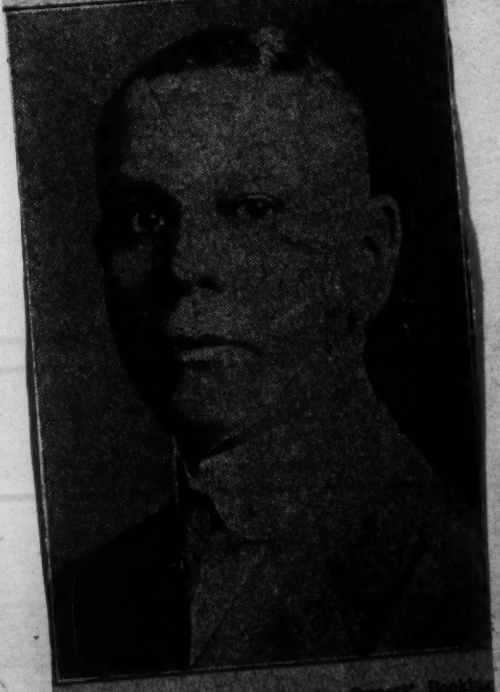
Altho the Lafayette Players have been successful in stock plays, many being former Broadway successes, I personally feel that these talented actors are going to attract general attention in distinctive racial dramatic presentations. I am more confirmed in this belief after the recent engagement of "Goat Alley" at the Bijou Theater, New York, which regarded this big theatrical project as the most comprehensive and constructive inaugurated by the race since the period of rehabilitation. The fact that some of the leading colored financiers in America were behind the project—E. O. Brown, of Brown & Stevens, bankers, Philadelphia, and L. E. Williams, president [illegible] Savings Bank, Savannah, died a natural death after making a run for public favor one week. While the play was advertised as a "Negro DRAMA by Negro ACTORS," neither white nor colored playgoers appeared to place much credence in this statement.

Aside from providing entertainment the stage also functions as an educational medium. Unfortunately, it has done little to date to create a better understanding between the races; or I should say it has done little toward giving the Caucasian a clearer insight into Negro life. The minstrel show of yesteryear created some erroneous impressions which continue to live, and other Negro stage types have not helped.

With the advent of the Negro in drama before white audiences I look forward to the crystallization of a fairer and more favorable sentiment toward a people one hundred per cent American, and the white American public, by means of the stage, will come to know many of the Negro's virtues, for today he is usually portrayed at his worst, be it in the daily press, the [illegible], that has been manifest in all sections.

Many artists have passed thru the Lafayette as players for varying lengths of service; some to greater rewards, and even distinction, the experience acquired no doubt being of material assistance to their progress.

C. H. TURPIN



Vice-president of the Theater Owners' Booking Association and owner of the Booker T. Washington Theater in St. Louis, Mo.

Theatrical - 1921.
Troupes, Individual, etc.

The Theatre

'Goat Alley,' a Realistic Negro Play, Is Acted at the Bijou by an All-Negro Company.

N. Y. C. SUN
JUNE 21, 1921

Those first nighters who went to the Bijou Theatre last evening expecting to see "a show" and to be entertained were disappointed, for "Goat Alley" proved to be a serious, realistic drama that treats of the dwellers in the worst part of the negro slums of Washington. It is presented by negro actors, who were so natural that they seemed to be living their parts in real life rather than just acting. The crudities of the play cannot be blamed on the manner of its presentation. But the author, Ernest Howard Culbertson, evidently knows negro life much better than he does the technique of play writing.

Dr. Victor Robinson, head of the Sociological Department of the *Medical Review of Reviews*, which produced the play under the direction of Cecil Owen, made a short address before the curtain before the play started. He denounced narrowmindedness in general and the prejudice against the negro in particular. Unfortunately, the types of negro selected by the author are of such a low and primitive order that they would fail to arouse the sympathy of the average audience. Even *Lucy Belle Dorsey*, and *Sam Reed*, the leading characters, who are struggling to maintain a monogamous existence in free love and promiscuous love surroundings and against the heavy odds of almost insuperable economic conditions, are primitive creatures who swear freely and have little or no control over their emotions whether of love or anger or jealousy.

But as a realistic picture of negro life at its lowest ebb the play would be difficult to surpass. When the play opens *Lucy Dorsey*, who is *Sam's* common law wife, helps out their slim living at their little Washington home by taking in washing while he works at a poor job in Baltimore. They have a small child who is an additional handicap in their efforts at bread winning. *Lucy* has had a "past," but *Sam* has been no angel and he lets bygones be bygones. His own "past," *Lizzie Gibbs*, a "fast woman," turns up at inopportune moments throughout the play, and as she is a vindictive michiefmaker she is one of the causes of their marital downfall. But when *Jeff Bisbee*, a former lover of *Lucy's*, threatens to kill her if she does not run away with him *Sam* returns in time to fight him. In the course of a rough and tumble struggle *Sam* stabs *Bisbee* with *Bisbee's* own knife, *Sam* is sent to prison and *Lucy* keeps up a struggle against poverty for a year.

The struggle is too much for *Lucy*, and she accepts an admirer as a roomer and a lover. The last act takes place a year and a half later. *Lucy's* lover has deserted her, but there is a baby that poor *Lucy* has not intelligence or ingenuity enough to hide in an orphan asylum or some other place. *Sam* returns from prison sooner than he is expected and refuses to give *Lucy* one more chance as the final curtain falls.

Much emphasis has been laid by the producers upon the fact that "Goat Alley" is not a propaganda play. Yet as the persons in the play are not of high enough character to arouse real sympathy, except with such well informed theatregoers as know very well the negro problem in all of its phases, it would have made the play more effective to have stressed the propaganda side. Certainly that successful drama, "Damaged Goods," which was first presented in this country by the same producers, was decidedly a propaganda play. If "Goat Alley" is not propaganda why did such an altruistic organization as the Sociological Department of the *Medical Review of Reviews* produce it?

The acting of Lillian McKee as *Lucy Belle* was especially good, although she did not look pretty enough to have had so many lovers, and Barrington Carter was convincing as *Sam Reed*. For that matter, not a single part in the cast was poorly played.

It is in its frank realism that "Goat Alley" scores. The play, however, lacks variety, and one grows very weary of seeing the front door opened such a multitude of times and of hearing such a succession of knocks on that overworked prop. It would have been a relief if occasionally, in such a primitive community, some of the characters had entered without knocking.

If it does nothing more the play gives one a decided feeling of chagrin that Washington, our capital, has one of the worst negro slums in the entire country.

THE PLAYGOER.

NEW YORK CITY TIMES
JUNE 21, 1921

'GOAT ALLEY' IS DIM AS TO 'NEGRO PROBLEM'

It Reveals Nothing New Sociologically or Dramatically, but Is Realistic at Times.

GOAT ALLEY, a play in three acts by Ernest Howard Culbertson. At the Bijou Theatre.

Lucy Belle Dorsey.....Lillian McKee
Aunt Rebecca.....Beaulah Daniels
Slim Dorsey.....Louis Lang
Lizzie Gibbs.....Daisy Garett
Chick Avery.....Owen Lane
Jeff Bisbee.....Leonard Kennedy
Sam Reed.....Barrington Carter
Jeremiah Pocher.....William H. Smith
Policeman.....Plant Lang
Fanny Dorsey.....Gladys Monroe

In preparing the public mind for "Goat Alley" the Medical Review of Reviews has been at some pains to make the point that here was an important play of negro life, a work of some sociological value that should deal frankly and fearlessly with a vital phase of the negro problem. A further endeavor to impress this viewpoint upon the play's audience was made before the curtain rose at the Bijou last night, when the impending play was hailed by a medical speaker as a daring and relentless cross-section of negro life.

"Goat Alley," however, blazes no new trail, either dramatically or sociologically. It is not without its points of interest—it is a serious play acted entirely by a cast of negroes, and it contains several stretches of realistic writing. But the issue that it deals with may hardly be said to be exclusively a negro problem—Eugene Walter dealt with it a dozen years ago in "The Easiest Way," and far more expertly. For "Goat Alley," being the story of a negro girl who tries to remain true to her lover through adversity, is nothing more than a dark pale reflection of "The Easiest Way."

The author, Ernest Howard Culbertson, probably has been faithful enough in transcribing to the stage certain minor manners and colloquialisms of the negro, but he has written rather a crude and inexpert play, moving jerkily, and illumined only occasionally by flashes of life. The play suffers considerably, also, by reason of an inadequate performance of the leading rôle. As a matter of fact, the piece would probably have been just as realistic throughout had it been played by professional actors in blackface, although there was a good performance last night by Owen Lane and an effective one by Daisy Garett. Leonard Kennedy and Barrington Carter also staged the most realistic stage fight of the season.

The sponsors of "Goat Alley" have made it known that no one under 20 will be admitted to the theatre, but if the ruling is observed then the minimum age for "Ladies' Night" should be raised to 45.

N. Y. C. JOURNAL
JUNE 21, 1921

NEGRO ACTORS DEPICT LIFE IN 'GOAT ALLEY'

Thrilling Fight One of Scenes in Drama of "Primitive Love and Life."

Presented by negro actors and intended to depict the lawless life of the colored population of a certain section of Washington, D. C., "Goat Alley" had its first New York showing last night at the Bijou Theatre. Ernest Howard Culbertson, who, as a reporter, is said to have "covered" that section of the capital, wrote the piece, which is styled a drama of primitive love and life. Miss Alice Wade Mulhern, of the Sociological Department of the Medical Review of Reviews, is named as the producer.

The play, in three acts, all laid in the living-room of Lucy Bell Dorsey's home in Goat Alley, tells of the love that Lucy Belle bears for Sam Reed, who has a job in Baltimore and is paying her bills. In her past Lucy Belle has spent a year and a half with Jeff Bisbee, a fact that she had concealed from Sam.

Lizzie Gibbs, a well dressed negro damsel, is also enamored of Sam and threatens to "get" Lucy Belle. This she does by telling Sam of Lucy's life with Bisbee. The news, later confirmed by Lucy Belle, is a stunning blow for Sam, and when Bisbee enters Lucy Belle's door it is the signal for a fight.

Rarely has a stage fight been better done. The two men, at death grips for the possession of a knife, struggle about the room, overturning chairs and a table and finally upsetting a closet full of dishes. Sam finally turns Bisbee's knife so that Bisbee is badly cut. Sam is sent to the penitentiary for five years and Lucy Belle is left to struggle as she can with her child, Fanny.

Fearful of "speerits" and "ha'nts," her aged roomer, Jeremiah Pocher quits her when boys sprinkle salt on the doorstep. That is a sure sign of the "speerits" will return. Soon arrives Chick Avery, a well-dressed negro, who has a job as a barber on a Norfolk boat. He is taken in to occupy the room left vacant by Pocher.

When Sam gets out of prison, after two and a half years, Lizzie Gibbs is the first to greet him with the news that Lucy Belle has another baby and that it looks like Chick Avery. The baby, one of the cutest ever seen on the stage, rouses Sam's resentment and he flees from Lucy Belle, leaving her to fight the world alone.

Considering that the negro sections of the big cities were scoured for just the right types of negroes wanted, and that, when found, they had to be taught to act, the performance is most creditable. Excellent acting is done by Lillian McKee as Lucy Belle Dorsey, Daisy Garett as Lizzie Gibbs and Barrinton Carter as Sam Reed.

Preceding the play an address was made by Dr. Victor Robinson, head of the sociological department of the Medical Review of Reviews. The cast was as follows:

Lucy Belle Dorsey.....Lillian McKee
Aunt Rebecca.....Beulah Daniels
Slim Dorsey.....Louis Lang
Lizzie Gibbs.....Daisy Garett
Chick Avery.....Owen Lane
Jeff Bisbee.....Leonard Kennedy
Sam Reed.....Barrinton Carter
Jeremiah Pocher....William H. Smith
Policeman.....Plant Lang
Fanny Dorsey.....Gladys Munroe
A Baby.....By Herself

Negro Is Coming Forward Rapidly In Drama Work

Los Angeles Times

...by the dozens of theatre producers throughout the country who have, during the past summer, erected theatres to be supplied with colored talent, Frank Egan is about to launch a similar venture that promises to be an important local movement.

That the American negro is rich in artistic possibility has been fully demonstrated by the work of such men as Bert Williams of the "Follies" and Charles Gilpin, whose work in "The Emperor Jones," Kenneth Macgowan, after considering the difficulties he had to overcome, has rated as "the best among the acting of 1920-1921."

Knowing the importance that the play holds in the success of such a venture, Mr. Egan has been careful to select a worthwhile medium for the display of the latent ability of the negro talent chosen.

"Africanus," written by Eloise Bibb-Thompson, former special contributor to the magazine section of the Los Angeles Sunday Tribune, is said to be a play of tremendous possibility with emotional material great enough for the enthusiasm of any professional cast.

Olga Gray-Zacsek, under whose efficient direction the play is being rehearsed, has expressed herself as being particularly charmed with the possibilities offered to the actress in the character of Ghwana, a part as fine as any she herself has had the opportunity thus far of appearing in.

Miss Gray has lately come from Detroit, where she not only starred in Shakespearean and modern roles, but assisted in the production of several musical successes staged by the Symphony Musical Drama company of Detroit.

In accord with the intrinsic merit of "Africanus," Mr. Egan plans to use futuristic settings and unusual light effects in its production, which is scheduled to take place in a downtown theater at an early date in January.

with the same faith manifest

Theatrical – 1921.

Troupes, Individual, etc.

THE NEW PLAY

By KENNETH MACGOWAN.

N. Y. C. GLOBE
JUNE 21, 1921

'Goat Alley,' a Tragedy of the Negro, Comes to the Bijou.

The auspices of the Medical Review of Reviews, and the sinister words "For adults only," are likely to send a lot of people to "Goat Alley" who won't care at all for this sombre and veritistic study of the mind and misery of the Negro, and it will probably keep [illegible] number who would applaud its author for doing a fine piece of reporting, even though he slipped up on his drama now and then.

Ernest Howard Culbertson knows the Negro. He knows his virtues and his failings, his devotion and simple-heartedness, his hopelessly childlike reactions to every stimulus of the emotions. He knows also conditions of life in Washington that go a step deeper in degradation than our own white slums.

Out of these things he has drawn ten or a dozen genuine characters, sharply defined and clearly pictured by their own speech and certain passionate relationships which bring misery after misery upon the heroine. The play at the Bijou pounds upon that bitterest tragedy of the Negro among us, the impossibility of ever getting out of the vicious circle of his ignorance and his poverty. "Somethin' like dis is al'ays goin' a happen," cried poor Lucy Belle.

"Goat Alley" is uncompromising tragedy, tragedy without a death. It lacks, however, the command of English which made Torrence's "Rider of Dreams" both true and lyrical. The dialogue jumps rather than progresses. And its dramatic action is carried forward by awkward and forced means.

The play is acted by an all-colored cast. Not the first, of course, that has appeared in serious drama about the Negro, for Robert Edmond Jones presented only colored actors in the dramas by Torrence at the Garden five or six years back. The present acting is not so good; it has the surface truth of types, but often it is stiff and amateurish in intonation. Barrington Carter, however, gives an uncommonly good performance. Daisy Garett is excellent in a rather showy part, and Louis Lang, Beulah Daniels, Owen Lane, Leonard Kennedy, and William H. Smith succeed in conveying the author's intentions to a very considerable degree. Lillian McKee, who plays the long and difficult part of the heroine, does surprisingly well, considering her evident lack of technical training. Her sincerity is enormous, and she has moments almost as moving as Lucy Belle's tragedy.

An uncompromising, tragic study of the Negro in his slums, excellently characterized, but a little unskilful in construction.

"Goat Alley" Presented With Colored Players

N. Y. C. WOMEN'S WEAR
JUNE 21, 1921

By KELCEY ALLEN

The sociological department of the Review of Reviews, the organization which backed the sponsors of "Damaged Goods" a few years ago, is behind Alice Wade Mulhern's production of "Goat Alley," which was produced last night at the Bijou Theatre with a cast of negro players.

"Goat Alley" is the work of Ernest Howard Culbertson, a Washington, D. C., newspaper reporter. It is not propaganda and blames no one for the conditions which exist, nor does it suggest or point out their remedy. It is a grim picture of things as they are in the segregated colored districts in large cities of the East and South. It is a somber story, convincingly told, but crudely written.

The locale of the play is "Goat Alley," a negro quarter in Washington, D. C. Lucy Belle Dorsey, a young negress, is living amicably with a young negro named Sam Reed. Previous to that she had been been living, against her will, with a lazy brute called Jeff Bisbee. Jeff finds her at Sam's house and attempts to make her return to him. He and Sam fight, and Jeff is badly wounded. Sam is arrested and sent to jail. With her support gone, Lucy takes in washing and roomers in an attempt to support herself and a little daughter.

But one by one her roomers leave her, and she is reduced to living on a little money she has laid by. Meanwhile she has been annoyed by the attentions of Chick Avery, a flash type of negro, who wishes to rent a room from her. She realizes his intentions and refuses him the room. Then her brother, Slim Dorsey, steals her little savings and removes her last barrier between starvation and her little daughter. She sends for Chick Avery to give him the room.

A year and a half later Sam returns. Chick Avery has deserted her in the meantime, and left her with an infant. Sam has returned unexpectedly, and Lucy attempts to conceal the infant from him until she can smuggle it out of the house to relatives. But presently Sam discovers the infant, and flings out of the house in blind fury, vowing he will never return. And Lucy is left to return to the same slough of vice and sin from which she will probably rise no more.

The cast revealed two excellent players—Lillian McKee, as the unfortunate Lucy, and Daisy Garett, as her rival for Sam Reed's affections.

NEW YORK CITY RECORD
JUNE 22, 1921

GOAT ALLEY," A SOCIAL DRAMA, AT THE BIJOU

By KELCEY ALLEN

The sociological department of the Review of Reviews, the organization which backed the sponsors of "Damaged Goods" a few years ago, is behind Alice Wade Mulhern's production of "Goat Alley," which is being offered now at the Bijou Theatre with a cast of negro players.

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But one by one her roomers leave her, and she is reduced to living on a little money she has laid by. Meanwhile she has been annoyed by the attentions of Chick Avery, a flash type of negro, who wishes to rent a room from her. She realizes his intentions and refuses him the room. Then her brother, Slim Dorsey, steals her little savings and removes her last barrier between starvation and her little daughter. She sends for Chick Avery to give him the room.

A year and a half later Sam returns. Chick Avery has deserted her in the meantime, and left her with an infant. Sam has returned unexpectedly, and Lucy attempts to conceal the infant from him until she can smuggle it out of the house to relatives. But presently Sam discovers the infant, and flings out of the house in blind fury, vowing he will never return. And Lucy is left to return to the same slough of vice and sin from which she will probably rise no more.

The cast revealed two excellent players—Lillian McKee, as the unfortunate Lucy, and Daisy Garett, as her rival for Sam Reed's affections.

N Y C CALL
JUNE 23, 1921

"Goat Alley," a Drama of Negro Life, Acted by Negroes, Is a Faithful Report on the Slums.

"Goat Alley," a new drama of Negro life presented by Negro actors at the Bijou Theater, is distinctly an "unpleasant" play, to adopt Shaw's ironic classification, but it is also an uncompromisingly realistic tragedy of "the lower depths" in the life of the American Negro, sincerely acted and quite without the smutty sex appeal in which our farces and burlesque shows often indulge.

There is nothing appealing about sex nor life as it is painted in "Goat Alley." The author, Ernest Howard Culbertson, with the vividness and fidelity of an honest reporter, pictures an alley slum in Washington, D. C., as Gorki pictured a Russian slum in "Night Refuge," or Tolstoi the brutalized peasants in "Powers of Darkness."

This author has not the philosophic insight into humanity of Gorki nor the passionate faith of Tolstoi. He lacks the poetic imagination of Synge, whose tramps and beggars and wastrels sing a haunting melody of disillusionment—but he knows life at its worst, and sets it before one without mitigation or glamour. No revolting detail of action, speech, or suggestion is omitted in this "drama of primitive love and life."

Here are a handful of men and

Here are a handful of men and

women living in brutal promiscuity, in the degradaton of crowded quarters, squalor, and viciousness. The heroine, Lucy Belle Dorsey, is more a victim of life and her own nature than Tess of the D'Urbervilles or Eugene Walter's Laura in "The Easiest Way." She has lived with a scoundrel before the play opens, but is so deeply attached to Sam Reed, with whom she is living as wife, that she has never told him. Her secret is revealed to Sam by a rival, and, though he forgives her, a fist fight follows when Jeff turns up, in which Sam wounds the brute with his own knife. He is sent to prison for four years, and the rest of the play follows the fortunes of Lucy Belle in her struggle for existence.

The girl is represented as genuinely devoted to her man, but she has a child to support and a vicious brother who preys on her and robs her. When her lodger leaves her and she grows ill with hard work, when her brother steals her last cent, she allows a flashy admirer to rent the vacant room. The inevitable under the circumstances follows. He soon deserts her, but when Sam returns unexpectedly from prison, he finds a [illegible] that can't be explained away. He leaves Lucy Belle on the spot, and you see her life stretching on endlessly between the drudgery of unceasing toil and the weak yielding to her uncontrolled longing for life and affection.

The first act of this genre study is crowded with interest, the second act drags even as the heroine's days drag, until she yields to her seducer, while the last act is full of quiet wretchedness. The author is more successful with his characters than with the handling of incidents. The bully, the steamboat barber, the whining, spendthrift brother, the old mammy, the foul tongued "yaller gal," are startlingly lifelike, and the Negro actors are unaffected and realistic in these comparatively easy roles.

The heroine is a more difficult character to portray and Miss Lillian McKee does not succeed in doing it full justice. She scarcely makes one believe that four men would pursue her, and while she is convincing in her scenes with the children and her brother, she speaks in a mechanical fashion in other scenes and shows other signs of inexperience.

The Sociological Department of the Medical Review of Reviews is presenting this faithful record of Negro life; for, aside from its dramatic value, it is doubtless intended to point the example of what ignorance, poverty and slum life mean in our boasted civilization. Probably no end of lighte skinned pharisees will conveniently forget the degradation of some of the New England rural communities where similar conditions are a blot on decency and progress, and will fail to admit the universal truth behind the special instance.

"Goat Alley" has been advertised as the first play about Negroes acted by Negroes, but we must insist on correcting this mistake. More than five years ago, three plays by Ridgely Torrence, produced at the Garden Theater by Mrs. Norman Hapgood, were among the most remarkable one-act achievements of our stage. "The Rider of Dreams," in particular, glorified the sordidness of Negro life with happy carelessness of fancy lacking in Mr. Culbertson's play.

MAIDA CASTELLUN.

'GOAT ALLEY' REVEALS UNPLEASANT CONDITIONS

N. Y. C. REVIEW
JUNE 21, 1921

Negro Drama at the Bijou Proves Exceedingly Strong Meat

Using the theatre to arouse public opinion against crying evils in the life of the day is a legitimate undertaking, although some people may take excep-

(over)

(From Over)

tion to it. There is no doubt that Goat Alley, in Washington, D. C.'s, Negro quarter, needs reforming. If anyone has any doubts about that all they have to do to be convinced is to see Ernest Howard Culbertson's drama of "primitive life and love" of that name at the Bijou Theatre, where it is presented under the auspices of the Medical Review of Reviews, Sociological Department, the same that gave us "Damaged Goods" and "The Awakening of Spring."

Dr. Victor Robinson, of the Medical Review staff, prefaced the performance with a few explanatory remarks, and entered a disclaimer that the play was propaganda. It is that, however, despite what the good doctor says. You cannot help feeling considerably stirred up after seeing the degrading conditions in which the Negroes live in Goat Alley. You want to clean the whole place out and sweep the riff-raff of humanity which inhabits this breeding place of lust, crime and all kinds of sordid evil-doing, into reform institutions where they belong.

Just why such places as Goat Alley, with their records for murders, sex promiscuity and illegitimate children are permitted to exist in any American city is unexplainable. Surely our boasted civilization is capable of dealing with these sinks of iniquity if it chooses, and the only thing needed is to arouse public opinion against them so that they will be abolished. Perhaps "Goat Alley" will serve that purpose.

The story mainly concerns a young Negress, who under other circumstances might be a decent girl, but living according to the ethics of the Alley she has one lover after another. They fight over her, abuse her, beat her, steal her money, all except one, who seems to sincerely love her and wants to live a decent life, but the environment is too much for him and her in the end.

There is a thrilling fight staged at the curtain of the first act between two of the girl's lovers, the good one and a bad one. It is one of those realistic, hair-raising fights that gives a real thrill. The Negro cast displays enthusiasm for their work. The note of realism is well carried out throughout the performance.

"Goat Alley" Is A Sordid, Degrading Characterization

Presents Only Lowest Types of Humans, Emphasizing Unrestrained Impulses and Passion, Pointing No Moral

New York Age 6/25/21

"GOAT ALLEY"—A drama of primitive love and life by Ernest Howard Culbertson. Presented by Negro Actors at the New Bijou Theatre, 45th street, west of Broadway. Under auspices of Miss Alice Wade Mulhern of the Sociological Department of the Medical Review of Reviews.

THE CAST

Lucy Belle Dorsey	Lillian McKee
Aunt Rebecca	Beaulah Daniels
Slim Dorsey	Louis Lang
Lizzie Gibbs	Daisy Garett
Chick Avery	Owen Lane
Jeff Bisbee	Leonard Kennedy
Sam Reed	Barrington Carter
Jeremiah Pocher	William H. Smith
Policeman	Plant Lang
Fanny Dorsey	Gladys Munroe
A Baby	Herself

By LUCIEN H. WHITE

Advance announcement of the play, "Goat Alley," referred to it as dealing largely with the sex life of the Negro in segregated districts, and as having a subtle sociological value, a value which especially appealed to the head of the Department of Sociological Research of the *Medical Review of Reviews*. It was also announced that no adolescents, or persons under 20 years of age, would be permitted to see the play.

Certain suggestions or intimations in the literature sent out concerning the proposed presentation gave the impression, indefinite perhaps, but distinct enough not to be altogether a shadow, that the author, in this play, was creating a propaganda intended for healthful effects upon the problem of the races. As the sponsoring organization, the *Medical Review of Reviews*, had previously brought out the play "Damaged Goods," in which disease problems were presented, it was not unnatural that the idea should occur that "Goat Alley" was intended to further that particular propaganda.

But it does nothing of the sort. The scenes are placed in the slums its characters are of the lowest slum type, and the play portrays [illegible] and to present the lives and surroundings of these people without the slightest effort to raise them above their environment and without one single ray of light of moral or mental development.

The nearest approach to anything of this sort is found in the character of *Lucy Belle Dorsey*, an unmarried girl who has a child several years old, its father being *Jeff Bisbee*, a man with whom she had lived, as she put it, through fear of physical injury if she refused, and from whom she ran away at a convenient time. The girl becomes infatuated with another slum denizen, *Sam Reed*, who is sent to prison for injuries inflicted upon *Bisbee*, who rediscovering *Lucy*, was attempting to force her to rejoin him. The fight furnishes the play's only thrill.

Then while *Reed* is in prison, one of *Lucy's* old friends appears on the scene. And it is in a scene where this man, *Chick Avery*, tries to persuade *Lucy Belle* to submit to his embraces that she reaches what might be called her highest flight. Reminding him of their long friendship, she begs him not to approach her with that sort of a proposal, but to help her keep faith with *Sam*, who has her promise to wait faithfully until his release from prison. But this flight hardly takes her off the ground, as she shortly finds herself in a financial straight because of the inroads upon her small savings by a dope-fiend brother, *Slim Dorsey*, and so when *Chick* would have gone from her she called him back and allowed him to become her lover.

There is not one redeeming feature in the whole play, from the standpoint of any sort of uplift. The audience, which filled the Bijou to its capacity, necessitating the selling of standing room to a number of people, was composed almost entirely of whites who probably had had no contact with the Negro race which would enable them to know that the characters presented in this play are not typical of the race as a whole.

Each character was delineated with emphasis on its sordid lustful characteristics; the language was untempered and unmodified, there was no intimation by suggestion or innuendo, but a bare-faced naming of whatever feature of the degraded life it was wanted to portray.

Dr. Victor Robinson, head of the Sociological Department of the *Medical Review of Reviews*, addressed the audience prior to the first curtain, and made an express disclaimer that the play was propaganda. With that statement in mind, the query comes into mind: What can be the object of the organization in bringing before the people, the white people especially, such a story of degradation, shame and despair as is contained in "Goat Alley?"

The play is degrading. It is loathsome. It is vile. And a danger is that vies undesirable elements will be transmitted in some degree to some of those making up the audiences. Vice, notwithstanding its "hateful mien," is soon "pitied, then embraced," when too constantly associated with. And the Negro race has no monopoly of the kind of people portrayed in "Goat Alley," by any means. Lewd and lascivious women and libertinous and licentious men are common products of all races, and often is the story of their debauchery told upon the stage.

But the Caucasian race can better stand the telling or the showing of its shortcomings and its depravities. As a matter of fact, they are usually the only auditors, and the disclosures, therefore, are only to themselves. But the Negro is having a hard struggle to get away from the miry mud of past conditions and I can see no good result to be attained by such a delineation as is given by Ernest Howard Culbertson in this play, "Goat Alley."

Story of the Play.

The entire action takes place in *Lucy Belle Dorsey's* home in Goat Alley, Washington, D. C. The first act discloses *Lucy* living with *Sam*, after she had run away from *Jeff*. Her brother, *Slim* dope-fiend and crap-shooter, is hanging around parasitically. She has also her little daughter, *Fanny*, born while she was living with *Jeff*. The latter discovers her abiding place and comes to get her back. She refuses. *Sam* comes in and discovers *Jeff* of whom he had but recently heard. A fight ensues in which *Sam* gets the best of *Jeff*. *Sam* goes to prison for four years *Jeff goes* to the hospital.

The second act, a year later, finds *Lucy Belle* struggling to keep her home intact while waiting for *Sam's* return. *Chick Avery*, an old friend, comes back and, discloses his desire for *Lucy*. She repulses him and begs him to be simply her friend and help her keep faith with *Sam*. Her brother, *Slim*, steals a small sum from her hidden board of savings, and she discovers this just before *Chick* is about to leave. In despair at her loss, *Lucy* calls *Chick* back, and permits him to remain.

The third act, a year and a half later, finds *Lucy Belle* again alone, so far as *Chick* was concerned, he having left some three months earlier, just about the time that a baby of which he was the father was born to *Lucy*. As a result of good behaviour, *Sam's* sentence has been materially shortened and he is released at this time from prison. *Lucy's* brother brings her word of *Sam's* return, which surprises her, and throws her into a panic because of the presence of Chick's baby. *Lizzie Gibbs*, flashy and prosperous, conscienceless and unscrupulous, enamored of *Sam*, also learns of his release and comes to *Lucy's* house in search of him. She had already learned of *Lucy's* association with *Chick*, and on this visit she discovers the *Baby*. When *Sam* comes in, *Lizzie* begs him to come with her, offering money and an easy life, but he spurns her, refuses to consider her offer, and orders her from the house. In revenge, *Lizzie* informs him that *Lucy* has been living with *Chick* while *Sam* was in prison, and tells of the *Baby*.

In despair, *Lucy* attempts to deny the charge, and tries to keep *Sam* from investigating. He forces his way into the bedroom and returns with the *Baby* in his arms. He turns a deaf ear to *Lucy's* pleadings and will not listen to any explanation. He casts her off in anger and leaves vowing he will never return. And so the play ends.

What moral is to be drawn or what lesson is hoped to be etaught is not apparent to me. But a quotation credited to George Jean Nathan and printed at the end of the program, is rather illuminating in the inferences which it carries. It reads, " *'Goat Alley' is probably the most acute transcription of the Negro yet made visible in our native dramatic literature.*"

Theatrical - 1922.
Individual Troupes.

Colored Girl From India Joins Ziegfeld Follies

New York Age 8-5-22

(By LESTER A. WALTON).

Just before sailing for America, Florenz Ziegfeld, when asked by the Paris correspondent of the New York "World" whether he had found new beauties for the Follies, replied:

"Only one, Nyota Nyoka, and she is mighty dark. She is an East Indian princess and looks like Ann Pennington bound in Morocco leather. But her dancing is as good as her figure, which could not be more shapely. Paul Poiret, the dressmaker, discovered her, and I am going to put her in the Follies as soon as she arrives in New York next month."

When Mr. Ziegfeld describes his latest acquisition for the Follies as "mighty dark," we take it that her complexion bespeaks without an iota of doubt she is a simon-pure colored girl. That her comely face of brown will stand out in bold relief and make her easily distinguishable from other bewitching beauties is without question. She will not have "to pass for white" as we have known colored girls of light complexion to do in order to hold membership in white musical shows.

They are singing a song in the Follies about Broadway getting darker every day. With the presence of Miss Nyoka in the most gorgeous of all musical productions the song can be sung with added fervor and conviction.

Florenz Ziegfeld is the most daring and original showman in America. I have always regarded him as the "Teddy Roosevelt of theatricals." He has the courage of his convictions even on matters racial. When he first put Bert Williams in the Follies it was the most advanced step taken by a manager in America. His rivals loudly criticised him for permitting a Negro to appear on the same stage with white women, irrespective of the fact that Mr. Williams was acknowledged to be one of the world's greatest artists before the footlights. But carping critics and race agitators were treated with silent contempt, and Bert Williams became the Follies most popular member.

While in the South this Spring word came to me that Mr. Ziegfeld was planning to use a number of beautiful colored girls in the Follies of 1922. Upon my return to New York I was disappointed to learn that he had given up the idea.

Perhaps there has been merely a temporary abandonment of such an innovation. Maybe the installing of Nyota Nyoka among the bevy of Ziegfeld beauties is in the nature of an experiment.

It is to be deeply regretted, however, that white America usually blinds itself to the type value of its native colored stock, but smiles with favor on something very much the same as long as it bears the foreign brand. In the long tariff discussion that has been going on in the Senate for months, it would be well for our Solons to give some attention to the relative intrincic values of our native and foreign colored elements.

There was no imperative need of Mr. Ziegfeld importing a colored girl from overseas for his show. A walk up Seventh avenue, between 125th and 145th streets will reveal American colored girls whose pulchritude will excel that of Ann Pennington's, and whose form will rival that of Venus.

Politically, I always have been an ardent protectionist in favor of preserving the interests of the home product.

SMUT IN THE THEATRE.

The Billboard, which claims the largest circulation of any theatrical paper in the world, published the following stinging editorial in its issue of August 5:

New York Age 8-19-22

"Do not blame the colored performer for the smut with which the lines, lyrics and business of recent Broadway productions have been loaded.

Put it where it belongs, on the white cretins and moral lepers that promoted and staged the offerings.

The Negro artists protested earnestly and vigorously over the filthy material, but vainly. Their objections were overriden and their pleas disregarded.

It was only when they realized that if they were to make Broadway at all they would have to do as they were told that they compromised with their finer instincts and surrendered.

Do not blame the colored actors.
Do not blame the colored actresses.
Blame the white degenerates who are solely responsible.

In view of the fact that many of the theatrical critics of the daily press have criticised the objectionable features of the colored shows on Broadway, it is well to have the responsibility placed where it belongs. The authority of the *Billboard* to speak by the book in theatrical matters is unquestionable. When it places the blame for suggestive and pruient appeals to the public taste on the producers it undoubtedly states the facts of the case.

But why should these producers pander to the prurient and immoral appetites of the public unless they believe that their audiences demand and relish such overripe fruit? The producers of teatrical shows are in the business for money making purposes chiefly, if not entirely. They would produce "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or "Main Street," with a bedroom scene of course, if either of them drew to full houses. Rightly or wrongly these producers calculate that lewd suggestions by word or action please the public, hence their insistence that the actors debauch their art to draw the crowds.

The actors are the main sufferers in this debasement of their art to cater to the vulgar and prurient minded public. In the cases mentioned they must either act the parts assigned them or give up their hopes for a stage career. The ultimate responsibility for immorality on the stage, however, lies with the public. The managers of these particular shows may believe that nastiness pays, and there may be a sufficient number of the seekers of that sort of stuff to ensure an ephemeral success. But in the long run the producers will find that their policy of indecency does not pay.

The scorching and blistering denunciation by the *Billboard*, while it takes the mask off the producers, applies with equal force to the prurient minded public that makes such pandering profitable.

"SHUFFLE ALONG"

BOSTON MASS TRAVELER
AUGUST 5, 1922

"Shuffle Along" the all-colored musical melange, which has beaten out every record ever made for long runs in New York, will begin its second successful week at the Selwyn Theatre Monday night, and gives every indication that it will be as popular in Boston as it was on Broadway. A number of entertaining stars with excellent voices and nervous feet have contributed their share to the success of the piece, Miller and Lyles, authors and featured comedians, send forth a brand of comedy causing in every line a laugh, a genuine health laugh, which is extracted without at any time resorting to any trick of the game to get it. Their candidacy for Mayoralty honors in a small town has given them something which suits their particular line of work. Then there is Sissle and Blake, composers of the score of "Shuffle Along," also featured members of the cast. They have given to the theatregoing public such numbers as "Wild About Harry," "Love Will Fnd a Way," 'Bandanna Days," "Honeysuckle Time," "Gypsy Blues," "Shuffle Along," "I Am Craving for that Kind of Love," If You Haven't been Vamped by a brown skin, you haven't been vamped at all." The cast is made up of the best singing and dancing artists ever assembled with a colored organization. Besides Miller and Lyles, Sissle and Blake, there are Lottie Gee, Edith Spencer, Mattie Wilkes, 4 Harmony Kings, Roger Mathews, Onion Jeffrey, Tommy Woods, The Palm Beach Four, David Williams, Bob Lee and many others. Two of the big features of "Shuffle Along" are the whirlwind singing and dancing creole beauty chorus and the most efficient colored orchestra.

MAMMY.

Will Rogers, the great comedian, now appearing his last engagement in Chicago, starring in the Ziegfeld Frolics, brought a laugh to his audience when he announced in his inimical manner that no songs about Mammy were to be sung in his show and the house applauded loud and long. We have really sung about that old slavery character too long and it is to our best interest to forget her.

Mammy was the soul of servitude. She served long and faithfully, she has had her memory perpetuated for years and it is about time that they let poor old Mammy rest in peace for she has been dead to these many years!

The quaint old character that nursed and loved the southern rebel has passed off the scene of activity, there are no more Mammies. We now have mothers of the new generation and they breathe a freer air than dear old Mammy did. We know that southerners miss Mammy but she has passed on and if there is to be any more singing to be done commemorating her, let the white people sing about it.

The above clipping is taken from the editorial page of the Chicago

Whip, issue September 2, to which we ascribe amen, for we are firm in our opinion that the sooner the ante-bellum Negro is forgotten, the better. We think that it is high time that the Negro learn to think of himself in terms of a high class moral, intellectual and spiritual being, marching along in the majestic stride of civilization as are the other more advanced races of people. We admit that the number of achievements under reverse conditions are, and ought to be forever held sacred, but we do contend that it is better to forget the lengthy ordeal of persecution and proscription indented with the damnable auction block and the cat-o'-nine-tails. Forsooth it to say that such memories may lead the younger mind to believe that it is my nature inferior and incapable of the highest development. This is especially dangerous to the young.

We agree that there are those who find inspiration in folk songs and folklores, but we contend that they are in the minority and that the majority are those who want to forget the past and think of themselves more in terms of free American citizens, forging ahea in American moral, civic, economic intellectual and spiritual characteristic, rather than in terms of suffering and persecution.

The Whip aptly puts it, "There are no more Mammies. We have now mothers of the new generation." We quite agree with the Whip. To us our old mothers are the dearest, sweetest and best souls God ever gave, and we reverence them second to none except the God who put them here to make out of this a better world. But, we feel that we should no longer think of them as the servile Mammy, but in terms of the same parental affections in which offsprings of other races hold their mothers. We, as they, are blood of their blood, flesh of their flesh, bone of their bone.

We have often seen white people singing the praises of "Mammy" because of many reasons in which we find no fault. But, their reasons cannot compare with the reasons of our reverence for those who gave life to us. They think of them in terms of faithful service. We think of them in the terms of the pains they bore in, bringing us into being, and for us to think of them in terms of suffering from the sting of the lash and of being sold away from their young, cannot but be more painful than pleasant.

The new Negro's emotions are conservative. The Ante-bellum's emotions were too high and dangerous. High emotions are signs of weakness and ignorance. A person who gets happy quickly and falls over a church bench will as quickly get angry and jump over your head. Consequently, the new Negro does not like to think of things, whether they are folk songs or folklores, which stir up high emotions, but rather assume a quiet easy manner of intelligent restraint.

"Mammy has passed on," says the Whip, "and if there is to be any more singing done commemorating her, let the white folks do it."

HARDING AND PHILIPS

It will be remembered that President Harding immediately upon the assumption of the Presidency, outlined and attempted to put into practice a new southern policy—that he decided to follow the old delusion of fifty years standing of attempting to build up a republican party in the south without the use or co-operation of the Negro race—that instead of building up a party upon principles and fundamentals as intended by Fremont, Lincoln, Grant and Roosevelt, he fell into the error of trying to erect a party upon prejudice, racial hatred and downright meanness.

In pursuance of this policy, he came into Georgia and struck down the organization of fifty years standing that had functioned and kept alive republican principles for more than a half century—that independent of the organization recognized and stamped as regular by the last National Convention which nominated and elected him, he came into the state through carpetbag rule and set up arbitrarily and dictatorially, an organization with one J. Lumber Philips of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, as head, through which he has dispensed the patronage coming to the state.

His one effort has been to eliminate the Negro and build up in the state a white man's party—not a party of usefulness, of character, of principle, of precedent and of Americanism, but one of prejudice, race hatred, meanness, ignorance and downright dishonesty.

In July, 1921, in consummation of this crime against the public morals and the integrity of the party of Fremont, Lincoln and Roosevelt, he dispatched to Georgia one Clarence Miller from Minnesota, who is now dead and forgotten, one Joe Kealing, a disreputable politician from Indiana, one Billy McGintis, a second-hand politician from Ohio, and one Houston, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, who was never heard of as a republican nationally until Harding was elected. These are the men who came to Georgia, organized a convention presided over by Clarence Miller, now deceased, as representatives of the National administration and put one Philips at the head of the organization who was at that time indicted by the auditing department of the contract section of the war department and since indicted by a federal grand jury for stealing from the government quite two million dollars.

This is the character that the associated press sends broadcast over the country as having called on the President at the Whitehouse for a conference and report of the recent rump committee meeting held in Atlanta.

Philips having become such a stinch in the nostrils of the lily-whites until they having demanded his resignation in order that they might put up the appearance of decency and common honesty, forced a meeting in which Philips was supposed to tender his resignation that the Harding carpetbaggers and aliens might put up a show of respectability.

Philips called the committee to meet and after finding that he could not control a majority of the irregulars, he proceeded to have one Mike Covington, who has never been anything but a job hunter, to offer a resolution expressing confidence in him (Philips) without even tendering his resignation, which omtion Philips put and declared carried without a roll call or debate—holding the floor himself from the time he called the meeting to order until it adjourned.

Now, the public is interested to know what could the President discuss with this crook, except federal patronage. And if he discussed federal patronage with his man, Friday, the entire administration is discredited and the President himself portrays a betrayal of the confidence the American people place in the high office of President, when he stoops to discuss or to dispense patronage through a character who stands indicted by a federal grand jury for stealing, and is only out of jail because he was able to furnish $25,000 bail.

What crimes have the citizens of Georgia committed that all federal servants must be selected for them through a criminal—a man who is in direct route to the federal penitentiary for stealing—a man indicted for larceny and charged with many other crimes against the public morals and common decency? What right has the President, the servant of all the people, to associate, confer with, or take advice from such a character as J. Lumber Philips whom his attorney-general has caused to be indicted for a colossal larceny—a downright robbery of the government of which the President is at the head?

If the President wants white men to control and direct the destiny of the party in the state, could he not find respectable white men in the state not under indictment and accused of various crimes against the public morals and common decency? Is the republican party so hard up in the south for white leadership that it must stand between the penitentiary gates and those who would break in in order to have a white leadership? Is it bad enough to go to Pennsylvania, Indiana, Ohio and Tennessee and import carpetbaggers into our state to direct republican affairs, and it is far worse to impose upon us those under indictment and checked for the chaingang and charged with various other crimes almost unspeakable in their nature and character.

SELWYN THEATRE

"Shuffle Along," the all-colored musical melange, considered the "Miracle Show" of the season, will next Monday evening begin the seventh week of its remarkable Boston success at the Selwyn Theatre. The rollicking, tuneful melodies and the unusual cast of all-colored fun-makers with which "Shuffle Along" is possessed may account in a great measure for its continued turn away business at every performance. Miller and Lyles—Sissle and Blake combine a negro humor which is rare on the stage.

BOSTON MAIL TRANSCRIPT
SEPTEMBER 9, 1922

Theatrical — 1922.
Individual Troupes.

has not developed professional poise or grace in use of hands and arms, and, too, she ought not to be made up to appear as youthful as she does.

Frank H. Wilson, as the part Indian, *Joseph*, was a bit more tempestuous than his supposed ancestry would warrant and he might well tone down his exuberance. Rudi Taylor, Harold Simmelkjaer and Milton Dees complete the cast of colored actors and they give a satisfactory account of themselves.

Miss Wycherly was stately and dignified and performed throughout with graceful competency. Master Junior Tiernan, Henry O'Neill, Harold McGee, Walter Downing and David A. Leonard were the other whites in the cast.

A chorus of twenty, men and women, all colored, sang a number of Spirituals and work and play songs behind the scene, and in the voodoo incantations. One of the numbers in the Lake Ponchartrain scene is a Louisiana Voodoo Song, written especially for this play by Harry T. Burleigh. It is explained that no record of the voodoo chant can be found, and Mr. Burleigh has used the drum time as the basis of this composition. African chants used are from the collection of the late Natalie Curtis Burlin, arranged by Simango and Cele. William C. Elkins directed the singing and Arthur Rhone directed the orchestra, composed entirely of colored musicians. The players were assembled by Mrs. Dora Cole Norman of the Colored Players Guild.

Bert Williams: An Appreciation

Talent of Dead Negro Comedian, and His Personal Qualities, Described By White Fun-Maker Who Knew Him Well

New York Age
4/22/22

By EDDIE CANTOR.

One of the Leading Blackface Comedians of Today

The late Bert Williams stood before the public and was widely accepted as a comedian, but Mr. Williams was a talented and finished actor beneath the black face which was his heritage.

He had the advantage of belonging to the race which we more or less imitate when we put on burned cork. He knew each mental attitude of his own race and its humorous reaction to every situation. He had the ability to stand off and affectionately analyze the attributes of his race. As a natural black face comedian he was far superior to any of us who put on burned cork.

But as an actor Williams was far more than this. Those who have followed his work in detail will agree with me that very frequently during moments in odd scenes Williams dipped into the great realm of the fundamental art of acting and gave us emotion or comedy which was as universal in its appeal as the very writings of Shakespeare himself. Bert Williams had a natural aptitude for acting which was born with him and which he cultivated industriously during all the years of his career. But he also had a great affection for human nature. So his analysis of his fellow man was never cold and consequently his reproduction of it in acting was human and compelling.

If Bert Williams were alive and were willing, there is no one with whom I would rather share my scenes in "Make It Snappy" than with him. When I am acting all my thoughts are more or less centered on humor. So I take advantage of each little chance happening and chance thought and use it in my work. In other words, I try to be spontaneous, and whenever inspiration comes to me, even in the midst of a scene, I act upon it. I played for three years with Bert Williams. Williams was the same way and we frequently improvisd many scenes on the spur of the moment which we retained in subsequent performances. In spite of this fact Williams, although he constantly improvised, always fed me. He caught the drift instantly of what I was attempting to do and played up to me in such a way as to allow me to dominate the scenes which I was conceiving. This is a great attribute in both an actor and a man. The gossip of Broadway is filled with tales of actors who steal one another's scenes and boast of it. Williams gave me unhesitatingly what belonged to me just as I in turn fed him for the scenes which he himself conceived while we were acting.

"J. J. Shubert, while we were speaking of Bert Williams, the other day, made a phrase which I heartily endorse of Williams both as an actor and a man.

"Bert Williams was one of the whitest actors I have ever known," said Mr. Shubert, who had known him for many years.

"And that is exactly what Bert Williams was.

"Williams had a splendid regard for every little feeling or emotion of his fellow man. He loved humor and even practical jokes to an extent, but when he knew that a practical joke was about to be played he always took good care that it did not go too far. A very good illustration of this occurred when Bert Williams and I were playing Buffalo together several years ago.

"We were invited to take dinner together at the home of a mutual friend. And when we sat down at a table I found that the principal dish was pork chops. I never eat pork. Every one laughed at me, and I asked if they could cook me some eggs. There were no eggs, and so it began to look as though I would go without my dinner.

"After a time the laughter died down somewhat and Bert Williams turned toward the company at table in his gentle way and asked:

"Have all of you boys had all the fun with poor Eddie that you want to?"

"Every one thought he had and then Williams turned to a servant:

"Mary go out in the hall and bring in the package you will find in my overcoat pocket," he said.

"Mary returned in a few moments with a steak which Bert Williams had bought for me without saying a word to any one, knowing of the joke my friends were going to play on me.

"That was Bert Williams all over. He enjoyed fun and practical jokes but he didn't want anyone to go hungry because of them. No one else who knew of the joke, who took part in it had been as thoughtful, as affectionate and as resourceful as Williams.

That one act stamped him forever in my mind as that splendid thing a true gentleman.

CINCINNATI O BILLBOARD
APRIL 1, 1922

STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY OF NEGRO VAUDE. FIELD

Theater Owners' Booking Association Refutes Announcement That Opposition Circuit Has Won Over Managers

Evidence that the struggle between the recently organized Managers and Performers' Consolidated Circuit and the Theater Owners' Booking Association for the supremacy of the Negro vaudeville field promises to be hard fought, is contained in statements made public last week by Sam E. Reevin, of Chattanooga, Tenn., booking manager of the latter organization, in which he vigorously refutes the announcement that E. L. Cummings, president of the opposition project, has won certain of the T. O. B. A. managers to his standard.

According to Cummings the following houses—including several booked thru the T. O. B. A.—have been added to the lineup of the Performers and Managers' Consolidated Circuit: The Washington Theater, Indianapolis; Dunbar Theater, Columbus; Star, Pittsburg; Grand Central, Cleveland; Koppin, Detroit; Monogram, Chicago; Lincoln, Kansas City; Dreamland, Oakland; Dreamland, Muskogee; Aldridge, Oklahoma City; Park, Dallas; Booker Washington, Texarkana. Attractions booked thru the Consolidated office began playing some of these houses last week.

On the heels of this announcement comes the following statement signed by Sam E. Reevin, booking manager of the T. O. B. A., which organization, according to its chief executive, Milton Starr, does not intend deviating from its fixed policy of ignoring the "publicity propaganda" of the opposition circuit:

"In the last few weeks all connected with Negro theatricals have been flooded with literature from the so-called 'Managers and Performers' Consolidated Circuit.'

"All know that this is a new thing just trying to organize, and after receiving a letter, the first thing that attracts your attention is a line of letters printed in red, reading 'Largest Booking Agency in the World.'

"I felt, after reading the first letter, that it is an imposition on the reader. It certainly is a nerve for some individual to [illegible]

make such a statement.

"In my estimation these gentlemen have started out by exaggerated statements and followed them up in the press, and I must call their bluff . . . ."

(The article referred to by the writer appeared in an Indianapolis colored newspaper, which carried the announcement that C. L. Cummings had signed the Washington Theater of that city. According to T. O. B. A. officials B. B. Stone, manager of this house, in a telegram to them denied the Cummings announcement.)

". . . . In a more recent issue of the same paper there appeared a telegram captioned 'Last Minute News,' under the signature of E. L. Cummings, the chief mogul of the new circuit, wherein he announces additional houses he has lined up, and among others he has Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Muskogee. But, after said telegram was published, I am in receipt of the following telegram from Tulsa:

"'I have made no change nor has Mrs. Breaux of Oklahoma City.
(Signed) Mrs. L. T. WILLIAMS.'

"I am informed by managers approached by the promoters of the new circuit that they have promised cheaper shows, and I am informed by artists that they have been promised larger salaries. Cheap shows or the managers and higher salaries for the artists—if they can accomplish that they have my best wishes for success."

The Stone house in Indianapolis and the three Williams theaters in Oklahoma are held to be of strategic importance to either circuit, in that each serves to break long jumps between some big business locations.

No colored circuit would be complete without a Chicago connection. Once in the Windy City provision must be made for the acts to get back to Southern territory. The jump to Louisville, Cincinnati or other points on the Ohio river is entirely too great for the salary limit of these circuits. This makes Indianapolis important.

In Texas there are about twenty Negro-supported theaters, fully a dozen of which are dominated by Chinta Moore, of Dallas. He was an associate of Cummings in the old Southern circuit which some time ago was absorbed by the T. O. B. A.

According to booking men it is easy to get into Texas by way of New Orleans, but after playing across the State and back it is absolutely necessary to find a way out thru Oklahoma and Arkansas, for the reason that there is a dead-line to the West. There is no Negro population to cater to west of Middle Texas. For the same reason it is impossible to go north thru New Mexico and Colorado as do white attractions booked thru the same territory.

Control of the Williams houses means connection with the Moore and Sack interests in Texas. On these latter elements Cummings is said to have a sure thing, while to date the T. O. B. A. seems to be holding the friendship of the former interests.

According to Cummings the Consolidated lineup is complete, stretching from New York City to Dallas, Tex., and from Chicago to Tampa, Fla. Walter Plimmer is associated with Cummings in the venture.

An Opera Star

Chicago Defender 3/13/20

MRS. ANTOINETTE GARNES

For five successive years Mrs. Garnes, a coloratura soprano, sang with the Chicago Grand Opera Company. She has a repertoire of 65 operas. Sings in Spanish, French, Italian and German. She won the diamond medal, post-graduate class, Chicago Musical College, and received degree of Bachelor of Music and Master's Degree in Music, the only singer of our Race possessing these honors. She is the wife of Dr. Harry W. Garnes and resides at 525 E. 42d place.

THE NEGRO ACTOR.

Mr. Alexander Woolcott, the dramatic critic of the New York "Times," in commenting upon the production of "Taboo," belittled the comments of those critics who gave high praise to the Negro actors in the caste. Mr. Woolcott, who has never exhibited any undue enthusiasm for colored plays and players, went on to say:

> "Except for Charles Gilpin in 'The Emperor Jones,' we have never seen a Negro role acceptably played by a Negro. That is because acting is more than a matter of impersonation. It is also a matter of emotional infectiousness, of humor and understanding, of concert with other players, of tempo."

Mr. Woolcott's comment above is unwittingly one of the finest tributes ever paid to the histrionic abilities of the Negro. When he says that Charles Gilpin in "The Emperor Jones" is the only Negro role he has ever seen acceptably played by a Negro he is giving the Negro as an actor a one hundred per cent. mark, because when he saw Mr. Gilpin he saw the only Negro who was ever given a real chance to play an important role on the New York stage.

How does Mr. Woolcott expect to see great Negro actors when no Negroes are given a chance to act great parts?

Mr. Woolcott's comment calls to mind some remarks which were made when the writer recently addressed a well known liberal club. In the discussion which followed, one gentleman who had taught in the South for a year or so, in discussing what I said about the per capita amount for public school education spent on white children in contradistinction to the amount spent on colored children, observed that in considering these figures it should be borne in mind that the colored teachers worked for a good deal less. He then added that they could, of course, work for less because they did not live so well as the white teachers. I called to his mind the fact that he was reasoning backwards; that colored teachers did not do either of these things because of any inclination to scab; that they did not live as well as white teachers because they got smaller salaries and the only reason why they accepted smaller salaries was because the state refused to pay them larger ones.

And yet this sort of reasoning is quite general, and especially, it seems, regarding any question pertaining to the Negro. It is the sort of reasoning of the small boy who made a remarkable discovery and communicated it to his father as follows: "Papa, why is it that all the big rivers run by the big cities?"

NEW YORK CITY VARIETY
JUNE 16, 1922

"SHUFFLE ALONG" IS SCARING OTHERS AWAY

Said to Be Interfering with Bookings of All Colored Hits—Offer for London

The booking of "Shuffle Along" the all-colored show which is still playing at the 63rd Street, appears to be a problem in the big offices. The attraction has broken all records for an attraction of its kind, the current week being its 56th week in New York, but the refusal of other attractions to follow it in, is reported to have held up major stand bookings. It is understood the Olympic, Chicago, booking for the show was cancelled for that reason.

The show figures to finish its run here next month. It has been booked for the Selwyn house in Boston for August. The attraction's management, however, may accept a London engagement offer, said to call for $5,000 weekly for 10 weeks as the company's share and transportation both ways for company and orchestra. The offer is said to have come from Albert de Courville. Acceptance of the English offer will mean cancellation of the Boston engagement. At the same time the show's management is anxious to keep it running at the 63rd Street, with nothing in sight to follow it in. The problem of securing another attraction is believed to be similar to that which is supposed to be holding up road bookings.

The No. 2 "Shuffle Along" in playing Brooklyn stands, however, did not cause any booking difficulties probably because of it being the end of the season. That company closed a two-week engagement two weeks ago at the Montauk, getting $8,400 the first week and $5,500 the second. On the final night the orchestra and company were on the verge of striking and the curtain was held about 20 minutes while the matter of salaries was attended to. Part salaries for eight weeks was owing up to the time the show hit the Subway houses and started getting real business.

The second company, which also did well at Atlantic City, was attached there by Walter Brooks who staged the show. His agreement called for one per cent. of the gross for each company. At the shore a cash bond of $1,800 was necessary, the claim late being settled for $900.

Theatrical — 1922.
Individual Troupes.

N. Y. C SUN
APRIL 15, 1922

Bert Williams, an Appreciation

Talent of Dead Negro Comedian, and His Personal Qualities, Described by White Fun Maker Who Knew Him Well.

By EDDIE CANTOR.

One of the Leading Blackface Comedians of To-day.

The late Bert Williams stood before the public and was widely accepted as a comedian, but Mr. Williams was a talented and finished actor beneath the black face which was his heritage.

He had the advantage of belonging to the race which we more or less imitate when we put on burned cork. He knew each mental attitude of his own race and its humorous reaction to every situation. He had the ability to stand off and affectionately analyze the attributes of his race. As a natural black face comedian he was far superior to any of us who put on burned cork.

But as an actor Williams was far more than this. Those who have followed his work in detail will agree with me that very frequently during moments in odd scenes Williams dipped into the great realm of the fundamental art of acting and gave us emotion or comedy which was as universal in its appeal as the very writings of Shakespeare himself. Bert Williams had a natural aptitude for acting which was born with him and which he cultivated industriously during all the years of his career. But he also had a great affection for human nature. So his analysis of his fellow man was never cold, and consequently his reproduction of it in acting was human and compelling.

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SERIOUS DRAMA AND THE NEGRO.

5/14/22, Dallas Tex: Times

More and more frequent evidences of the fact that Negroes are capable of entering the field of serious drama and making acceptable contribution to it are beeing found from day to day.

The complete success of Charles Gilpin, star of "Emperor Jones" has called attention to the ability of the race in this regard and opportunities for its entrance into the field of serious drama hitherto closed to it, are being made.

Shuffle along" and all Negro production is generally acclaimed as one of the season's greatest successes. And now "Taboo" a play portraying the "hoodoo cult" as practised both in Africa and America has made its appearance in a manner worthy enough to engage the attention of critics of note. The cast of the play is mixed but all critics to date have seemingly been most impressed by the native Negro chants and dances as portrayed by the actors of these parts who are Negroes.

Almost forgotten is the once popular theory that Negro actors were fitted only for mimicry and burlesque. This theory is fast being discarded as the public, weary of "problem" plays and exhibitions of social degeneracy, is turning in welcome to portrayals of life in America as it actually is.

And we doubt not but that in the near future, the ligitimate drama will in greater degree, seek to explore this field, rich in human emotions of every sort, which lies in the true portrayal of the relation of the races in the South in times past and even in the present.

Should such a time come the effect will be twofold.

It will prove to the public that many of its beliefs as to Negro nature, founded upon its portrayal by narrow and perverted minds, are erroneous.

It will also serve to heighten the regard of the Negro actor and the public generally for those splendid racial traits and qualities which, never having been as openly shown as his unfortunate side, were generally thought not to exist.

And we hope that this condition may also lead to the production in greater quantity and more acceptable quality of works caluculated to advertise the Negro more favorably than has been the case in former years.

The stage offers great opportunity for the exploitation or advantageous advertisement of racial groups. Heretofore this advertisement as it concerned the Negro has been adverse. Fuller opportunity to show the better side of him by his own representatives has to commend it the fact that it will give to the productions in which it occurs a greater degree of truth in portrayal, and to Negro artists more ample opportunity to display a kind of talent which he without doubt possesses in substantial amount.

Lynching is fast becoming unpopular in America. It has been advertised as it really is. The truth has been told about it. Only another proof of the fact that advertising pays even in national affairs.

NEW ALL-NEGRO REVUE.

"Strut Miss Lizzie," by Creamer and Layton, at Times Square.

The furore created by "Shuffle Along," which was largely responsible for several all-negro ntertainments in the past year, probably did not attempt to bring forth "Strut Miss Lizzie" last night at the Times Square. This newest of the negro revues, subtitles the cast "beauty" it will be remembered that Flo Ziegfeld's "Follies" glorify the American girl—and is generally entertaining if somewhat repetitious succession of songs, dances and comedy scenes. It is the work of the experienced team of Creamer and Layton, who have written a good many songs and several musical comedies since they first joined hands.

"Strut Miss Lizzie" comes by way of Houston Street, where it was pronounced a decidedly good entertainment. One suspects htat it has suffered a little by the process of elaboration—nearly all of the scenes had a way of being just a bit too long last night. It is at its happiest when its people sing and dance, or jig to the good old tunes. And it is at its lowest ebb during the comedy scenes, although a pair named Green and Burnett managed to be highly entertaining, despite the fact that a crap game figured in the proceedings.

For the most part, however, it is a singing and dancing show, with an active chorus ranging from dark-hued to not very dark at all. These Creole damsels—bare-legged part of the time—make excellent South Sea Islanders, and spend most of the rest of their time, so far as "Strut Miss Lizzie" is concerned, on Southern plantations and in restaurants. They help to keep "Strut Miss Lizzie" moving, although nothing quite atones for some of the more deadly of the comedy scenes.

The authors, after introducing the revue over the telephone, appeared again at a late hour to do a Van-and-Schenck act—singing their own compositions, new and old.

N. Y. C. GLOBE
MAY 5, 1922

PLAYS and PLAYERS

The Rising Interest in Negro Drama.

A new group of Negro actors called the Acme Players are to give a midnight performance a week from tonight in the Lafayette Theatre, under the auspices of the Urban League. In the announcement of their venture they have submitted the following interesting résumé of the Negro in the drama taken from the recent book by Benjamin Brawley:

"In no other field has the Negro found the road as hard as in the drama," says Mr. Brawley. "In spite of his influence on American life it is only within the last few years that this distinct racial element has received serious attention. If we pass over Othello as a Moor rather than a Negro we find that he is best represented by such a character as Mungo in the comic opera called 'The Paddock' in 1768. Here, as elsewhere, there was no dramatic or sympathetic study of the race. Even Uncle Tom was a conventional embodiment of patience and meekness rather than an individualized character.

"That the Negro could succeed on the stage was shown by the career of Ira Aldridge, who made his way from America to Europe in 1833, when he played Othello to the Iago of Edmund Kean.

"But with the arrival of black-faced minstrelsy all association of the Negro with classic drama was erased. Some outlet, however, was found in musical comedy as represented by such combinations as Cole and Johnson and Williams and Walker. It was left to the Negro colleges to dream of a drama which could get away from minstrelsy and burlesque and present colored characters face to face with the problems which test the race.

"In 1914 'Granny Maumee,' by Ridley Torrence, was produced by the stage society. Two performances were given and were hailed by the press as 'an event as important in our theatre as the first play by Synge in relation to the Irish movement.' In 1917 this play was repeated by a company of all colored actors under the patronage of Mrs. Norman Hapgood and directed by Robert Edmond Jones. Other representative efforts are 'The Exile' by Williams, 'The Star of Ethopia,' by Du Bois, and the Edward Sterling Wright Players with their production of 'Othello.'

"Later, of course, comes the extraordinary success of Charles Gilpin in 'The Emperor Jones' and the arrival of 'Shuffle Along,' that buoyant and spontaneous musical comedy which is still packing the Sixty-third Street Music Hall after a complete year of continuous performances."

Incidentally the "Shuffle Along" company has made a new discovery in the person of Edith Spencer, who succeeds Florence Mills as the principal soubrette. Al Mayer, one of its producers, found her in a vaudeville performance at Poughkeepsie. She was part of a singing and dancing act which she had joined after leaving high school in company with another girl named Phine—thus the Phine and Spencer novelty turn. Her performance so impressed Mr. Mayer that as soon as Florence Mills left the cast he wired the young comedienne of Poughkeepsie to take her place. She is now singing the "Shuffle Along Blues" with much charm and spirit.

BOSTON MASS AMERICAN
JULY 23, 1922

"Shuffle Along," the Dark Operetta, at Selwyn

With the endorsement of the most prominent critics of New York backed by the universal approval of the Metropolitan theatre-goers, whose demands enabled it to remain on Broadway well into its second year, "Shuffle Along," the rollicking, all-colored musical melange, comes direct, unchanged, from the 63rd St. Music Hall by special train for a limited engagement at the Selwyn Theatre, beginning next Saturday evening, July 29.

Miller and Lyles, long favorites with vaudeville audiences, wrote the humorous book, and Sissle and Blake, late members of Jim Europe's famous band of the 15th Infantry, wrote the swinging and infectious score, all four being the featured members of the cast. The plot deals with the city election in Jim Town with Miller and Lyles as the opposing candidates and at the same time partners in the grocery business. Both spend money lavishly on the election and it all comes from the grocery cash register. The situation is made even funnier when the same detective is engaged to watch each of them, though both aspirants to the mayor's job are equally satisfied that no suspicion rests on him. Their work in the store and later in the Mayor's office is claimed to be the funniest piece of acting seen on Broadway in years.

The play is brilliantly staged and costumed and the music is tinkling and tuneful, and includes among the many hits, "Wild About Harry," "Love Will Find a Way," "Bandanna Days," "Honeysuckle Time," "Gypsy Blues," "Shuffle Along," "I Am Craving For That Kind of Love," "If You Haven't Been Vamped by a Brown Skin, You Haven't Been Vamped at All."

N. Y. C. TRIBUNE
JUNE 25, 1922

Negro Players Hold Fun for Footlights; Work Hard in Wings

Those who are familiar with life behind the scenes will find much to surprise them if they attend a performance of "Strut Miss Lizzie" at the Times Square Theater. They will discover that the conditions back stage are quite different from those of any other play in town and that the mood and spirit that prevails among the players is most interesting.

From the first days, in fact, that "Strut Miss Lizzie" was in preparation the colored players in the company showed a businesslike attitude that was most unusual. Though they regard their work with a great deal of temperamental enthusiasm, they never revealed this during their rehearsals. They would sit quietly by the hour, learning their songs and never chattering between times, never even visiting, but humbly memorizing the tunes that Joe Jordan, their director, gave them. They resembled, more than anything else, children in the schoolhouse, earnestly striving to obey a valued instructor. With a timidity that would resemble the bashfulness of a Hoosier farmer at an ice cream social, the men would group themselves off to one corner of the stage, while the women remained at the other, every one expectant, alert, sincere and ready to do anything within their power to achieve success.

Their patience and indefatigability are not surprising; yet they are possessed of a certain charm nevertheless and a certain pathos, too, for it represents the strivings of a race whose natural tendencies are toward song and dance, and who are eagerly waiting their chance to show the world what they can do.

The individual members of the company stand out with striking effectiveness, the more capable offering a decided contrast to the less capable—those who have had fewer educational and cultural opportunities. Hamtree Harrington, the droll comedian of the company, sits in the corner working out new bits of pantomime while Jean Roundtree discusses new numbers with Henry Saparo. Miss Roundtree gave up her school of dancing at Boston in order to take part in the performance, and Joe Jordan made sacrifices equally great. Creamer and Layton are perpetually busy composing, directing, modifying and passing out kindly and encouraging words.

Those people who are interested in the development of the negro as a man and as an artist will find much to interest them in a visit back stage to "Strut Miss Lizzie" at the Times Square.

Theatrical – 1922

Individual Troupes.

N. Y. C. ILLUSTRATED NEWS
JANUARY 11, 1922

"Shuffle Along," the Negro musical piece in the 63d Street Music Hall, is encouraged by its year of prosperity and has set about forming a second company to tour the provinces.

From the pen of a Los Angeles woman, Eloise Bibb Thompson, comes the unusual drama staged by Frank Egan at the Walker Auditorium, which today begins its second week. Played by a company of colored actors of experience, "Atrianus" has proved to be an offering unique to the Los Angeles stage.

COLORED BOY NOW STARS IN OWN RIGHT

Norfolk Virginia Journal

"Sunshine Sammy," Famous Little Movie Actor Completes Starring Vehicle. Has Played With Well Known Actors.

2/4/22

POPULARITY IS NOW UNIVERSAL

(The Associated Negro Press)

Los Angeles.—Frederick Earnest Morrison, the little Colored Movie Actor, styled the "Black Dinty" and professionally known as "Sunshine Sammy," and who for the past six years has brought tears or laughter to millions of movie fans the world over, has at last been given the credit long denied him, and promoted to a full fledged star.

Earnest has just completed his first starring vehicle, "The Pickaninny," produced by the Hal Roach Comedy Company, of Culver City, and released through the Pathe releasing agencies.

Born in 1913 near Canal and Carondelet streets, New Orleans, La., Earnest was brought to Los Angeles by his father and mother, Joseph and Louisa Morrison, and in 1915 he was employed to assist in the work of making Baby Marie Osborne an idol with the juvenile movie fans. Earnest made a hit from the start and ere long was co-starring in the two and five reel Baby Marie Osborne comedy-dramas. "Old Maid's Bamy," "Winning Grandma," "Voice of Destiny," "Sawdust Doll," "Little Diplomat," etc.

A year or so later he was placed under contract by Hal Roach and entered into steady productions of the Reach comedies co-starring with Harold Lloyd in such hits as "Haunted Spooks," "Get out and get Under," etc., and with Harry ("Snub") Pollard in regular weekly releases.

So universal has become the popularity of Earnest, that Marshal Neilan recently borrowed him from the Roach firm to co-star with the cast of famous juvenile actors in the Booth Tarkington "Penrod" just completed.

Last week the two former cinema celebrites, Jane and Katherine Lee, now playing in vaudeville, included Earnest among their juvenile guests at a theatre party at the Orpheum Theatre. Among those invited were Jackie Coogan, Wesley Barry, Jack Holt, Jr., Wallie Reid, Jr., and many other famous kiddies of the screen.

Earnest's salary has been advanced from time to time until it now reaches a weekly sum of three figures. Four hours per day Earnest spends with a private tutor learning the rudiments of the "three R's" and spends from four to six hours a day at the Roach Studios turning out a picture a week.

Earnest's father and his 6 year old sister, Florence, assist him occasionally in the pictures, Florence having worked with him in "Penrod." Success has only spurred Earnest to higher ambitions, and he works hard each day, acting, studying and saving his money and recently purchased a block of stock in a Colored Film producing organization.

Most Popular Juvenile

Chicago Defender 2/18/22

Frederick Earnest Morrison of Los Angeles California Best Loved Boy Comedian in Filmdon

• There have been many stories published regarding the enormous salaries being paid to different sorts of "stars" in the movies. A short time ago the papers all commented upon the fact that Jackie Coogan was being greased at an annual salary of $50,000. That report was very likely pure "bunk." If Jackie is worth the sum claimed for him "Sammy Sunshine," the subject of this short story, should be getting something like $1,000,000 a week—there being that much difference in their abilities—according to the writer's idea of values. A few days ago a contract was made by Sammy's parents for his services at an annual salary of $10,000, or $50,000 for five years, the life of the contract. Hal Roach Comedy Co., producers of Sammy's first starring vehicle, "The Pickaninny," is the name of the firm securing the clever youngster.

Couldn't Buy Seats To See Himself Act

Baltimore Afro-American 3/11/22

Hagerstown, Md., March 15—Yesterday afternoon a well-dressed, fine-looking colored man stepped up to the box office window at the Maryland and asked for orchestra seats to "Emperor Jones."

Of course, he could not buy them, as the gallery only was reserved for colored people.

That man was Charles S. Gilpin himself who is the star of the "Emperor Jones".

ARE WE READY FOR SERIOUS DRAMA?

Attitude Of Theatre Public Seems To Regard Everything As Comedy Behind Footlights

Baltimore Md. Afro-American

RACE DRAMAS ESSENTIAL

3/24/22

Negroes Cannot Take Their Place Among Place Among Other Peoples Without Own Plays

BY WILLIAM E. READY

Quite a number of the colored theatre-going public of this city have expressed disappointment that the installment of serious

was able to survive for only four weeks—and at that, under "stimulants"— the general public failing to support it.

In this connection, the question is again raised as to why there seems to be only a handful of colored people in any city, no matter what the colored population—even in New York City, it will be remembered, a similar venture finally "blew up"— who seem to fully appreciate this class of entertainment. And when I say appreciate, I do not mean the mere act of attending such performances, but also that higher appreciation which enables them to maintain that attitude of receptivity towards the theme of the story, in keeping with the mood as projected by the players.

What is meant by this latter paragraph is, that one of the most deplorable drawbacks that the colored actor of serious roles has to face, is the tendency on the part of the majority of those who attend dramatic performances by colored actors, to burst into laughter at the most tense and moving moments of the play. Charles Gilpin, the famous star of "The Emperor Jones" is reported to have complained bitterly of this sort of behavior by some of those who witnessed his portrayal in the latter drama.

Some attribute this sort of thoughtlessness to ignorance, usually meaning illiteracy. But this is not wholly the case, for personally we have seen some offend in this way, who are supposed to be of the more intelligent group among us.

As To The Type Of Plays

Getting back to the Douglass situation: The comment has been numerously advanced that the management made a mistake in opening the house with "Within the Law" a play which not only had been shown here a number of times in the white theatres, but had likewise been presented by the Lafayette Players during the short sojourn of that aggregation at the Playhouse on Eutaw street, known at that time as the Colonial Theater.

This comment seems to be sound. Other comment is, that colored people are no interested in seeing plays which deal wholly with phases of life peculiar to the civic and economic life of white people, which for reason well-known to all of us—differ materially in many respects from that of colored people.

Here again the argument seems to be sound.

The Negro Drama

What then, is the answer? It is not, in our judgment, hard to find: Our colored writers must turn their attention to the stage and give us dramas which deal with the everyday life of our own people, with all of those economic civic and social gradations peculiar to our own racial environments.

This is a field as yet practically untouched by our writers, and yet it is one of the most essential links in the chain of the upward advance of the race. Every civilized people today have their own writers and their little theatres where the native dramatists serve their apprenticeship before setting sail on the great sea of universal literature with an equal chance of finally anchoring in the harbor of enduring literary fame.

All Not Comedy

But even this drama will not be a success until the majority of theatre-goers, realize that everything that transpires behind the footlights is not done to provoke laughter; that there is such a thing as seriousness in life, and that the actor is exercising the highest theatrical art when he gives to his portrayal of a serious role those touches of genius that taps the deepest wells of emotion and invests the whole with the reality of life itself, even though it grips until it hurts.

When the average theatre-goer reaches this stage of appreciation for the true worth of what the theatre means, the way will be clear for a genuine Negro theatre, which is not only desirable but an absolute necessity, if we are to take our place in all things along side the other enlightened peoples of the world.

ers to appear on the stage together because invariably the Negroes act so much better. The colored members of the cast were responsible for everything vivid in "Taboo," the new play by Mary Hoyt Wiborg, which was produced yesterday at a special matinee at the Sam H. Harris Theatre.

Miss Wiborg perhaps should receive the credit of having realized the dramatic possibilities of a presentation of Voodoo rites, but she has surrounded this extraordinary divertissement with a story which is muddled and slow moving. With the exception of one scene in the first act, the play commands attention only when the Negro actors in it begin to dance and sing.

The only important white role in the play falls to Miss Margaret Wicherly, who made a beautiful picture, but who was entirely inadequate vocally for the heavy demands which the part made upon her.

nouncement of an all-Negro vaudeville entertainment the other day the promise of a player who would give Jewish impersonations.

Miss Wiborg's "Taboo," in our opinion, does not tap the potentialities of a people with an assured facility for the theatre, but it gives a hint of what might be done.

It is impossible for us to even even a scanty outline of the plot, because we did not understand the story. As a matter of fact, it seemed of little consequence as long as Paul L. Robeson was singing.

Paul Robeson's Singing and Alex Roger's Acting Feature The Presentation of "TABOO"

New York Age 4/8/22

Physical impediments made it impossible for an AGE reviewer to be present at the first showing of "Taboo," the play dealing with alleged voodooism as it was supposed to have been practiced by Louisiana Negroes. So, that AGE readers may learn something concerning its reception at the Sam H. Harris Theatre, where Augustin Duncan presented it on Tuesday afternoon, April 4th, and where it will be shown at special matinees on Tuesday and Friday afternoons, the review written by Heywood Broun, dramatic editor of the New York "World," is here with reproduced.

DRAMA

By Heywood Broun.

"TABOO," a play in three acts by Mary Hoyt Wiborg. Presented by Augustin Duncan at the Sam H. Harris Theatre.

New York 4/2/22

THE Cast:

Aunt Angy ..... Marie Stuart
Mammy Dorcas .. Fannie Belle De Knight
The Child ..... Master Junior Tiernan
Mrs. Gaylord ..... Margaret Wycherly
Charles ..... Henry O'Neal
Sadie ..... Ruth Taylor
Tom ..... Alex Rogers
Jim ..... Paul L. Robeson
Steve ..... Harold E. Simmelkjaer
Lemuel Johnson ..... Milton S. Dees
Joseph ..... F. H. Wilson
Cartwright ..... Harold McGee
Wheeler ..... Walker Downing
Dr. Elder ..... David A. Leonard

IN THE AFRICAN SCENE.

Queen of the African Tribe ..... Margaret Wycherly
King of the African Tribe ..... Paul L. Robeson
Nakula (the child's guardian) ..... Fannie Belle De Knight
Emanga ..... Marie Stuart
The Child ..... Master Junior Tiernan
Headman ..... Alex Rogers
First Attendant ..... Milton S. Dees
Second Attendant ..... F. H. Wilson
Papeloi ..... David A. Leonard
The Beze (the witch doctor) ..... C. Kamba Simango

It generally seems to us rather unfortunate for white and Negro players to appear on the stage together because invariably the Negroes act so much better. The colored members of the cast were responsible for everything vivid in "Taboo," the new play by Mary Hoyt Wiborg, which was produced yesterday at a special matinee at the Sam H. Harris Theatre.

Miss Wiborg perhaps should receive the credit of having realized the dramatic possibilities of a presentation of Voodoo rites, but she has surrounded this extraordinary divertissement with a story which is muddled and slow moving. With the exception of one scene in the first act, the play commands attention only when the Negro actors in it begin to dance and sing.

The only important white role in the play falls to Miss Margaret Wicherly, who made a beautiful picture, but who was entirely inadequate vocally for the heavy demands which the part made upon her.

A scene in which a company of twenty-ve[illegible] players are assembled to present a conjuring ceremony in a Louisiana swamp is enormously interesting. Augustin Duncan has staged it well, and the playing of Paul L. Robeson, Fannie Belle De Knight and Alex Rogers was unusual and exciting.

It may be that the tradition of the so-called "golden days" of the American theatre is best preserved today by Negro actors. In most scenes of violent emotion and florid expression it seems to us that they are incomparably better than all but a handful of their white competitors. They have abandon. They can actually give the illusion of ecstasy. There are so many excellent actors even in the most casually assembled company of Negroes that it seems possible that there must be some great ones some where or other among this race for which dramatic opportunities are still so rare.

Material of the richest sort waits for the artistic enterprise of any one who can write serious plays for Negro actors. Men and women in burnt cork have always been feeble substitutes. Such Negro stock companies as exist devote their attention to producing the popular plays of Broadway. We understand that "Potash and Perlmutter" has been done in Harlem, and we noticed on an an-

Why "Shuffle Along" Stays on Broadway

Afro-American Baltimore 4/28/22

Three beauties for the "Shuffle Along" Chorus, the colored musical comedy which has been at 63rd Street Theatre since May, 1921, and has been drawing $9,000 a week.

Theatrical — 1922.
Individual Troupes.

N Y C WORLD
JUNE 25, 1922

Jean Roundtree and Entire Ensemble.

Intermission—Joe Jordan and His Velvet Band, Ebony Rag (by Joe Jordan) Orchestra, Violin Sole, Bernice (by Joe Jordan), Violin played by Willie Tyler and Joe Jordan at the piano; At the Ball, Willie Tyler and Orchestra.

ACT 2—On a South Sea Isle, Core Green, Carrie Edwards and South Sea Islanders; Comedy Nondescript, Meet Miss Mandy, Grace Rector, Eddie Fields, and Ensemble; Mr. Leonard; The Creole Fans, Jean Roundtree, Henry Saparo, Elberta Jones, Carrie Edwards, Beatrice Williams, Ethel Taylor and Strutters; The Darktown Hod Carries, Green and Burnett; Miss Angelina, Cora Green, James Barrett, Charles Fredericks, Joe Henderson, Bud Halliday and Girls. Creamer and Layton in Old and new songs.

The Creole Chorus which attracted so much attention at the National Winter Garden that after two weeks it moved up to a Broadway theatre for a summer run.

MISS LIZZIE STRUTS NOW ON BROADWAY

Creamer and Layton's New New Show Opens Directly Across Street From Ziegfeld Follies

From American Baltimore Md. 6/30/22

By J. A. Jackson

The Creamer and Layton revue "Strutt, Miss Lizzie" revised, enlarged and speeded up to the limit, moved into the Times Square Theater on Monday, June 19th and went into active opposition to the Zeigfeld Follies at the Amsterdam Theater directly across the street.

Broadway's typical first night audience was augmented by a big crowd of the "Who's Who" of the amusement world; and they stayed to see the show through. A genuine measure of merit for any attraction on the big street.

It seems that Miss Lizzie has strutted into favor. The three weeks stay downtown served to correct the imperfections and today it is a finished show.

Already four of the numbers in the show are on the market, so quickly was the quality of the compositions recognized. "I am wild about Mandy" and "On A South Sea Island" number will probably follow "Dear Old Southland" and the title number into popular favor.

ACT 1—Spirituals, Georgette Harve and Entire Company, telephone introduction, Creamer and Layton; Dear Old Southland, Georgette Harve, Lake Sisters, James Moore and Ensemble, (a) "Mirandy" Hear Them Buzz, Charles Fredericks and Buzzing Creoles Vest Pocket Bert Williams, Hamtree Harrington; Full House Poker Club, Alice Brown and Hamtree Harrington; Creole Alley at the Ritz, Henderson, Halliday and Girls; Cafe D'Ella Lee, (b) Cafe Entertainers, Alice Brown and Grace Rector, (c) Coros Green, Beatrice Williams and Jimmy Moore with Chorus, (d) The Jazz Waiters, James Barrett and Charles Fredereicks, (e) Cafe Guests, Hamtree Harrington, Brevard Burnett, Iris Hall, Girls and Men, Head waiter, Henri Saparo; Just a Moment, Cora Green; Spilling the Beans, James Moore and Eddie Fields; All Aboard for New Orleans, Spanish Dancers—

ROBESON TO STAR IN ENGLAND

N.Y. American 7/30/22

Mr. Paul Robeson who has just joined the (4) Harmony Kings is leaving for London, England to do star with Madam Patrick Campbell the noted English actress in "Ba-boo," the Negro play, in which Mr. Robeson starred at the Harris Theatre this winter. The (4) Harmony Kings and Shuffle Along regret very much to lose this splendid artist, but an opportunity of this sort does't come very often and we are wishing him wonderful success. Mr. Robeson will no doubt be to England what Gilpin is to America. The news of his offer is received with great enthusiasm by his host of friends and we congratulate him and may the future grant him opportunity and fulfilment of his hopes. Luck to you, Paul.

N. Y. C. GLOBE
AUGUST 4, 1922

A Colored "Balieff"

Shelton Brooks, Noted Negro Composer, "Life of Party" in New Revue.

"The Plantation Revue," now in its third week at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, has a colored Balieff, a sort of a master of ceremonies. He is Shelton Brooks, the colored comedian and composer, whose songs have been sung from coast to coast.

Brooks was born in Cleveland, Ohio, of theatrical parents, who for many years toured the south at the head of musical companies playing to Negro audiences. He made his stage debut in a plantation show at one of the Cleveland summer resorts. After three years' experience he went to Chicago as a member of the first Negro theatre established in America, it is said. It was called the Pekin, and its offerings ran from "levee shows" to Shakespeare.

Then came a vaudevile offer and Brooks began a five-year tour of the "two a day" circuit with a dancing, singing and story-telling act, which proved highly successful. As Brooks himself puts it, "that circuit was the smallest time in the world."

While he was playing around Chicago, Lew Dockstader's Minstrels came to town. In the company was Al Jolson. A call was sent out by Dockstader for a new song. Brooks supplied it and Jolson sang it. It was labelled as "You Ain't Talking to Me," and the first song royalties began to pour in. From then on, songs like "Darktown Strutters' Ball," "Some of These Days," "All Night Long," "Walking the Dog," "Jean," "The Bee and the Rose," and others added greatly to the "royalty account," which Brooks kept separate from his "earning" or "vaudeville" account.

Brooks supplies many witty Negro yarns in "The Plantation Revue," and as yet has failed to repeat one since the opening.

DO WE WANT A BETTER STAGE?

Afro-American
Baltimore Md
11-24-22

Colored Theatre-Goers Are Not Supporting Their Own Theatrical Stars At

Colored Theatres

AN INSTANCE CITED

Chappelle and Stinnette Played To Empty Seats While White Gallery Is Packed

By W. E. Ready

The agitation that is constantly being carried on by this, and some other race journals for a higher standard of theatrical entertainmen in houses catering exclusively to colored patronage, is not getting the support of the theatre-going public,—the final determining factor in the matter—in a manner that lends encouragement to this effort if we must judge from a recent incident in this city.

The incident in question, is the appearance of Chappelle and Stinnette at the Douglass Theater. Here were two of the classiest colored stage artists in this country white or black. Intelligent, refined, with an act staged with no little elegance and above all, they were more than willing to give their audiences "a run for their money". other words, they were "hard workers" as stage parlance has it. And what was the result? They played to practically an empty house all week.

Three weeks before their appearance at the Douglass, they played the Academy, the Shubert vaudeville circuit house in this city, and were pronounced by critics of the daily papers as the headliners of the bill, which besides their act, was composed of all-white acts. Their jazz band was called by one critic the best that had appeared in this city this year. And they came to the Dougass and played to empty seats all week.

During the same week, that they were at the latter house, a white jazz singer was headliner at one of the local vaudeville houses, who for class, talent and artistry were no more to be compared with Miss Stinnette than a "Tin Lizzie' compares with a Stutz, and yet the gallery of this white house was packed to suffocation every night by colored theatergoers.

As further comparison, the bill as a whole which was being offered at the Douglass, was superior to the entire bill that was being shown at the white house in question. There was nothing on the latter's bill that was half as comical or entertaining as the comicalities of Tim Moore supported by his Chicago Follies Company, which supplement the Chappelle and Stinnette act to say nothing of Boots Hope, who was also on the bill. And yet they played to empty seats.

And still, when one puts the question, as to why colored patrons do not support their own theatres, and lend encouragement to the players of their own race, the theatergoers in question are ever-ready with the stock answer, that they would if colored houses cut out trash and play first class acts. And yet here was an act, and more, an entire bill that was first class in every particular, played in a beautiful theatre where they would not have to stumble over garbage and ash cans in the alley to purchase a ticket to climb to a gallery, but could buy a balcony, orchestra or box seat as they preferred.

And yet, here were hundreds of colored persons who preferred to climb to a white theatre gallery to witness a mediocre show rather than patronize a house catering exclusively to them, their "OWN" theatre, so to speak, presenting a really first class entertainment by talented members of their own race. As a matter of fact, there were more colored people in the gallery of the Academy when Chappelle and Stinnette played that house than attended their appearance at the Douglass.

And don't get the idea, that these defaulters are confined to the less advanced group of colored folk, for among them are many of the leading professional people of the city, many of whom are never seen in a colored theatre. We are speaking here not only for the Douglass, but for the Regent and all other colored theaters.

How can the standard of colored theatricals be elevated, so that the colored stage can take its place in the development that the race is making in industry and other esthetic pursuits unless it receives the support of the theatre-going public? What encouragement is it to the ambitious colored actor and actress to work to advance themselves in their chosen profession, if they cannot command the appreciation of their own race?

It is often said by the more caustic critics among us, that we never appreciate our own artists until the other race discovers them for us. How ever much we may be inclined to disagree with this verdict, here we have in the incident in question, a concrete instance of two supreme artists failing to draw among their own people after having received the highest endorsement from critics and theatregoers of the other race, they have been playing and constantly for a number of years, on the big white circuit.) What is the reason? Where lies the fault? To us the answer is to be found in nothing less than a lack of race pride. "The fault dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." is a quotation that seems well apropos.

N Y C TELEGRAM
DECEMBER 24, 1922

"Liza" at Daly's 63d Street Theatre.

"Liza," the new all-colored musical comedy, will enter upon its fifth big week at Daly's Sixty-Third Street Theatre. The cast remains intact, including Miller and Anthony, Greenlee and Drayton, Gertrude Saunders, Margaret Simms, Doe Doe Green, Packer Ramsey, William Simms, Eddie Fields and the greatest dancing chorus on Broadway.

went back stage to meet the actors and have our pictures taken with them. There we met "Ice CreamCharlie," "Boddilly," "Liza" and "Nora." After a second handshake with the favorite comedians we departed for the office of the DAILY NEWS.

The party was an unusually nice one, and if you want to go to one of my parties read about my next one on this page.

"Liza" at Daly's Theatre Pleases Ten Small Guests of NEWS

N Y C ILLUSTRATED NEWS
DECEMBER 24, 1922

(NEWS photo)

"Ice Cream" Charlie and Boddilly show our Sally's party a game of Put and Take that the rest of the audience at Daly's Sixty-Third Street Theatre did not see at "Liza" yesterday.

Sally Joy Brown Directs Fine Matinee Party.

By SALLY JOY BROWN.

"Oh, what a swell theatre! Lookit, the velvet things hanging around and all the gold! I betcha this is the swellest place in this whole city. And I betcha there is going to be acting, and oh, gee, I'm glad I'm here!"

It was a little boy who spoke and his face was alight with happiness indescribable. And when the show began and the curtain rose for the first scene of "Liza" (at the Daly Theatre) the faces of ten of my little guests were happy ones.

Too much can scarcely be said in favor of "Liza." It is a colored musical comedy that has more genuine humor in it than any show I have seen in some time. The songs are clever and have such rhythm that nearly every one in the audience was humming along with the orchestra. One of my guests said: "Shucks! Anybody could jig to that there music! I betcha I could get up on the stage and do that myself."

At the end of the first act one of the ushers brought us each a box of fine candy which was a gift from the management. This made a happy party even happier.

After the fall of the curtain we

Theatrical – 1922.
Individual Troupes, etc.

Baltimore Theatre Evicts White Women Who Hiss Negro

New York Age 9-9-22.

Bill Robinson ["Bojangles"] Made Big Hit with Audience—Three Showing Displeasure were Requested to Leave Theatre

The weekly theatrical journal, *Variety*, published in New York City, and perhaps the leading publication in the country issued in interest of the profession, carried in its issue of August 25 the following story from its Baltimore, Md., correspondent:

HISSERS OF COLORED ACT TOLD TO LEAVE THEATRE

Women in Maryland, Baltimore, Audience Disapprove of Bill Robinson.

Baltimore, Md., August 23.—At the Monday afternoon performance at the Maryland here a colored dancer, Bill Robinson, ["Bojaugles"] was billed for the deuce spot. He appeared, and after the applause from his first number hisses were heard throughout the house. Every one turned and necks were craned, but the performer kept on, unperturbed, and did another dance. Again he drew big applause, but after the applause had died down the hisses agian came distinctly from midway in the orchestra.

Again the performer kept on. After the next applause the hisses accompanied and were located.

Three women, apparently refined and certainly well dressed, of middle age, were requested to leave the theatre.

The audience, immediately after, encouraged the Negro and gave him as much applause as most headliners get.

This evoked a speech from Robinson. He said that in thirty years in the show business such a thing had never happened to him before, and that he had been taught that, should it ever happen, to ignore it. He did, and won his house by the neat way he turned the tide.

Baltimore is below the Mason and Dixon line, and is not extremely cordial to colored performers in white theatres; but Dotson, who is at the Garden this week, and Bill Robinson have been the exceptions. Dotson has played the Maryland time after time. He became so well known he drew a reception on appearance.

A sample of the racial antipathy is "The Emperor Jones," which did little business here at the opening of last season, principally because many objected to seeing a Negro acting before a white audience.

Pella Express
Pella, Iowa

Noted Elocutionist Has Returned to Lone Star State After a Successful Middle West Tour of Five States.

10/31/22

J. C. Phillips A. B. the celebrated dramatist and popular elocutionist of National fame. One of our southern products has returned to Dixie after scoring much applause and acrediting great praise as an artist in Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Iowa. From press comments and news items he proved himself efficient in his line and appeared before many mammoth audiences in Chicago and St. Louis and other leading cities of note since his arrival in state has appeared at Texarkana, Rusk and vicinity, Lufkin, Nacogdoches, Timpson, Garrison and Port Arthur and made Beaumont and Galveston, Houston and San Antonio before reaching Dallas. The race should get behind this young man and push him.

OLD-TIME MINSTREL SHOW AT THE ACADEMY TOMORROW

RICHM'ND VA TIMES DISPATCH
SEPTEMBER 24, 1922

The dances of minstrelsy are virtually all the lineal descendants of the eccentric dances of the colored race. They were first brought to the attention of the American people on the Southern plantations, and here it was that the first of the great minstrels of this nation copied the forms of dancing, which have since become traditional and famous in minstrelsy.

Negro dancing in its varied and various forms has been the chief feature of the minstrel stage ever since the origin of this form of entertainment, and without the dance of the plantation darkey minstrelsy would never have attained the place and the popularity it enjoys. In fact, without the dances of the Southland and the rich backgrounds afforded by Dixie plantations of the old days, minstrelsy could not exist.

Foremost and well-night alone, out of the host of contemporaries and imitators of years gone by, the Al G. Field Minstrels, coming to the Academy tomorrow, Tuesday and Wednesday, and Wednesday matinee, is famous for its gifted and famous exponents of minstrel dances. It returns this season with all its stars intact and the people of this city are promised a production outclassing anything offered heretofore.

Much of the credit for the fame of the Al G. Field terpsichorean contingent is due William Doran, who has been with the organization for many years as its dancing director and the originator, instructor and exponent of all the clever dance features in the show. Associated with him are some of the cleverest dancers on the stage today. Among these are Leo Doran, the director's brother; Boni Mack, a splendid dancer and female impersonator, whose work is of the highest type to be found anywhere; Edward Uhrig, Frank Miller, Sherman Dern, Warren Dungan, Billy Kane, Charles Nellis, Garner Newton and Roy Shelly.

BROOKLYN N Y EAGLE
NOVEMBER 28, 1922

"LIZA"

If the spontaneous delight of first-nighters may be accepted as an earnest of popularity, "Liza," which replaced "Shuffle Along" at Daly's Sixty-third Street Theater last night, with the original negro cast of the latter, will be literally a "howling" success. As a musical comedy it was crude with the crudity of the minstrel show, but the spectators could not resist the infectious swing of the music and melodies, nor the open-mouthed, white-teethed grins and grimaces of the actors and chorus; yells and shouts of approval recalled both from the wings for more encores than were probably ever given in New York before. It proved that the love for the minstrels of Dockstader and Primrose is not dead and that, in its modern form, it fills a decided need in New York.

Mace Pinkard's lyrics and music are, of course, the outstanding hit of the show, and an accomplishment of no mean caliber in jazzland. Within a week or two most of its melodies will be whistled, hummed, sung and phonographed in all quarters of the wind. In addition, the dancing not only of various principals, but of the "cafe au lait" chorus girls and the "light brown" dandies, is marvelous to those who have become accustomed to the wooden motions that go so often with a pretty face on Broadway.

But the book and the plot were exceedingly poor. Darktown in New York has thereby amply revenged white atrocities against the race in the South. The inventor of most of its jokes did not hesitate to crib from the best works of the fathers. In between the songs and dances things frequently dragged, but the merit of the former made forgiveness for the latter easy. It is doubtful whether this crudity was by design as alleged in "Shuffle Along," but since the latter was a big money-maker Irving Miller evidently decided to try it again. There is no plot, as a matter of fact. Some of the darkies of Jimtown, S. C., decide to erect a monument to a deceased Mayor. Squire Norris is played by Alonzo Fenderson, who has not a Southern drawl but choiest Bowery. After that all the old properties, including a graveyard, two ghosts, razors like scythes, etc., are introduced. But when the big cast is assembled on the stage, when their melodious voices ring out and their nimble feet go flying, no one insists on plot. There is more applause, then, than ever greeted drama, and the public is right.

The well-known figures of "Shuffle Along" are all there. Margaret Simms, Getrude Saunders, William Simms, Packer Ramsey, Quintard Miller, Eddie Greenlee, Thaddius Drayton, Will Cook, Irvin Miller, Emmet Anthony, Billy Mills, Doe Green Elizabeth Terrill, Maude Russel Snippy Mason, Donald Fields, etc etc., constitute the cast.

Theatrical - 1922.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

"Strut Miss Lizzie" Jams the Auditorium Theater

Chicago Defender 9-9-22

Creamer & Layton's New York Success an Artistic Triumph; Bart Kennett at Grand; Georgia Minstrels at Avenue; Good Show at the Monogram

A representative crowd, made up of both races, and which filled every seat in the immense Auditorium theater, attended the opening performance of Creamer & Layton's big New York musical comedy success, "Strut Miss Lizzie," on Sunday night. The intensely high temperature did not seem to have any effect whatever upon the enthusiasm of the 4,800 or more who were present, and the entire throng experienced as delightful an evening's entertainment as money could assemble. Coming direct from a long and successful run on Broadway, New York City, it was to be expected that something far above the average would be presented, and such was the case. Never before in the history of the show game has Chicago had a chance to give an aggregation such as this the "once over," and there are more good things and actual hits done up in this two and a half hour package of delight than was ever seen in a single offering. Aside from the singing, dancing and comedy end of the presentation itself, a concert by the celebrated 15th Regiment band of New York City is sandwiched in between the two great big acts which the attraction uses, and the varied though brief and speedy program offered had sensational results. This part of the performance is under the direction of F. Eugene Mikell and will continue until the end of the engagement, which is indefinite and should be a long one. Class and distinction stick right out from the very first number done, a group of spirituals by Georgette Harve and the entire company, with a set of class dances and songs by Miss Harve, Erma Overton, John Vigal, Mae Crowder, Lillian Goodner, Eddie Rector and Leonard Ruffin. In the regular routine the work of Cora Green stands out distinctly. Miss Green, who has been well known to Chicago amusement lovers for years, has developed into one of the most proficient and versatile entertainers on the American stage and in this show has unlimited opportunities, all

Tony Langston

of which she takes full advantage of. Her rendition of "Lonesome Longing Blues" and "He May Be Your Man" went over for hits, and her duet with Will Gulfport, a comedy number called "Nobody's Gal," elicited several nods and encores. Gulfport is of the team of Gulfport & Brown, the latter being one of the best "straights" of the times, and the team being featured throughout the show with fine effect. The Creole Sisters, Mae Crowder and Lillian Goodner, have a special spot in each half and more than make it, their "Bow-Wow Blues" getting them great returns. Most of the song numbers are backed by chorus groups, among them being "Two Loving Arms," by Walter Richardson; "Creole Belles," by Will Brown; "Strut Miss Lizzie," by Will Gulfport, and "Coney Island Hula," by Cora Green, assisted also by Carrie Edwards, as shakin' a soul as ever wore a Hawaiian costume. There is also a quartet of fine voice, who offer "different" songs in a manner which gains popularity. They are billed as the Plantation Four and they sure do harmonize. John Vigal and Flo Johnson give Creamer & Layton's "Mandy" just what is needed, and the latter mentioned team, writers of more song hits than any of the present day composers, present two bits of work in which they use their own original compositions and a piano. They were forced to respond to repeated encores on Sunday night. If there are any better "hoofers" in the business than Eddie Rector and Leonard Ruffin they have not as yet been sprung on the public. These lads were forced to work themselves into exhaustion and they tied up things for minutes with their wonderful and varied footwork. Iris Hall, formerly of the Lafayette Players and well known to Chicago audiences, has a speaking part in which she shows cleverness, and pretty Grayce Howell Rector, formerly featured with the Smarter Set Co., has many chances to display her varied abilities. The Plantation Four include Messrs. Small, Dean, Lawson and Joe Loomis, one of the Race's best tenors. Willie Tyler, one of the greatest violinists of the present generation, won a world of applause with a couple of solos. He is a member of the Joe Jordan orchestra, which is under the personal direction of Joe himself, a "native son," we are proud to state. The music throughout is of the classiest sort and, as might be expected, the costuming and settings are of the highest standard. This engagement should be a record one and members of the Race should take full advantage of this chance to lamp a real "Broadway" attraction with its galaxy of leading principals, its group of 80 selected and well trained choristers and its hundred features which appeal to lovers of fast-working, up-to-the minute musical comedy enterment.

THE AVENUE

Rusco & Hockwald's Famous Georgia Minstrels opened a five days' engagement at the Avenue theater on Monday night, giving two performances to fair but well pleased audiences. This form of entertainment has become very popular with Chicago audiences and everything presented found favor. The work of the "ends" in the big first part, as well as the song numbers offered by the "circle," all came in for their individual applause. Chick Beaman, king of modern minstrelsy, repeated the popularity gained by him on numerous former visits, both in the opening half and in the olio. The other ends included Tommy Harris, Al Coleman, Lasses Brown and Nay Brothers, who also hit with a fine novelty turn in the olio. Jack Johnson, the most capable interlocutor and a basso of no mean ability, presided and kept things moving with creditable speed. These songs were put over in the first part: "Strawberries," by Lasses Brown; "Don't Leave Me, Mammy," by Charles Woods; "Sunny Tennessee," by Al Coleman; "That's How I Believe in You," by J. S. Reeves; "Dapper Dan," by Hurl Nay; "Bass Viol," by Jack Johnson; "Arkansaw," by Chick Beaman; "My Mammy," by Arthur Malone; "Nobody Lied," by Harry Nay; "Why Should I Cry Over You?" by Bob Edmonds; "Toot Toot Tootsie, Good-by," by Tommy Harris. The after piece had the screaming farce, "The Black Justice," George Bryant's orchestra, the best ever seen with a minstrel show, handles the music in perfect manner, and the costuming, etc., is right up to the usual Georgia high standard.

THE GRAND

Bart Kennett, "The Imp of Satan," one of the greatest of modern prestidigitators, has his variety show at the Grand this week, and that house was sold out long before the second time around was due, despite the intense heat. Bart Kennett is one of those versatile mystery chaps who do everything, ordinary sleight-of-hand work to levitation and materialization, and his part of the entertainment is fast, interesting and in part of the comedy sort. He has his work arranged in three sections, and at no time do his efforts prove tiresome. His work is a revelation to those who are skeptical regarding the ability of "our folks" to do things of the sort, and Bart not alone delivers the goods in his line but has paraphernalia and stage equipment sufficient to "put on" his stuff in proper shape. He is assisted by Ferd Robinson, the popular comedian, and a couple of pretty girls who know their stuff. In the variety line Bart presents Charley Anderson, the double-voiced vocalist and yodeler, who proved to be a real hit; May Williams, a songstress of fair ability; Baby Mack, comedienne and singer of topical songs, and Tim Owsley, one of the Race's best monologists. It is a good show and full of novelty, and should draw well throughout the short engagement, which ends on Saturday night.

THE MONOGRAM

A bear of a bill is drawing packed houses here this week. It brings Nickerson & Parker, a cabaret turn in which a piano is used and in which blues and other song numbers are well put over; Carrie Lewis, a versatile young lady of fine appearance, who does a bit of singing, a little talking and some fine work on a cornet, which she seems to have mastered to perfection; White & Wright, a singing, talking and dancing comedy pair with excellent voices, and the popular team of Long & Jackson, breaking a jump to the big time by this engagement. This bill remains intact until the last show on Sunday night.

Darkey "Follies" Gives Gay Show at Auditorium

CHICAGO ILL POST
SEPTEMBER 5, 1922

"Strut Miss Lizzie": A musical show given by Creamer and Layton and other colored entertainers in the Auditorium theater, Sept. 4, 1922. The cast includes: Creamer and Layton, Georgette Harve, the Lake Sisters, William Gulfport, Cora Green, William Brown, Walter Richardson, Eddie and Leonard, Mae Crowder, Lillian Goodwin, Messrs. Loomis, Small, Dean and Lawson; and the Fifteenth Infantry band led by Lieut. F. Eugene Mikell.

By Charles Collins.

THE AMUSEMENT with which the Auditorium theater opens its capacious maw for the new season may be called, if you choose, an Afro-American "Follies." It is a high-spirited frolic of syncopated song and dance, with an occasional episode of sidewalk conversation, and it gives a copious exhibition of the range of talents which find colored entertainers in their happiest manner.

In answer to the inevitable question, "Is it as good as 'Shuffle Along'?" I should say no. But then, it isn't exactly that kind of a show. 'Shuffle Along," the great success of which in New York has brought out a crop of so-called "plantation" and "creole" pastimes, is a musical comedy, with a libretto, a plot, song cues and all the rest of the apparatus of that delightful genre of frivolity, while "Strut Miss Lizzie" is a vaudeville, a revue, or an exaggerated cabaret show. Of its kind it is ample and adequate. It fills the vast stage of the Auditorium with lively performers in various shades of color—buckskin, fawn, saddle, coffee and burned-cork—and its elaborate musical organization, vocal, orchestral and brazen, causes the famous acoustics of that great hall to vibrate in strange, subtle, and primitive harmonies. "Strut Miss Lizzie" is almost a hippodrome show in the density of its population. About all that it needs to qualify for the New York Hippodrome is one black elephant and one chocolate-colored camel.

The stars, Henry Creamer and Turner Layton, are the authors of the music and lyrics. If they are also responsible for the orchestration of the score, they deserve the applause of the musical doctors and the professional homage of John A. Carpenter, for the rich and brilliant fabric of harmonics with which their simple melodies are embellished represents a high order of musicianship.

Creamer and Layton have two appearances on the program for the exhibition of their specialty, which consists of songs at the piano in dress suits. They are neat, casual and engaging. Without any unusual vocal endowments they know how to put over this sort of thing.

William Gulfport is often seen as the black-face clown of proceedings, usually with William Brown as his "straight man." Gulfport follows the tradition of Bert Williams: he is the uncouth darkey who serves as a butt of ridicue for his more cultivated companion, and he is an undeniably funny fellow. His skits are casual, and are probably of his own invention. He has the vaudeville touch, but in a show like this he needs an author to give form to his little episodes.

Messrs. Loomis, Small, Dean and Layton, calling themselves the Plantation Four, are a unique quartet; their fantastic and delsartean way of treating part-song makes them comedians as well as singers. Score a hit for them. And another for Eddie and Leonard, a team of dancing youths whose feet understand the higher mathematics of syncopation. The numbers given by these two teams are the really unusual items in the program of "Strut Miss Lizzie."

Cora Green, a good-looking yellow girl, is the first soubrette of the amusement, and leads many numbers in a gayly effective way. She and "Strut Miss Lizzie" are at their best in a Hawaiian affair called "Coney Island Hula," in which the gyrations of the hay-garland skirts are even more excessive than those of the Kanaka wriggle-girls on the beach at Waikiki. The Fifteenth Infantry band, also known as "The Hell Fighters," gives a stirring demonstration of the prowess of military brass; the colored orchestra led by Joe Jorfan also obliges with a brisk little concert; and Georgette Harve leads the company in some lovely singing of spirituals.

COLORED ACTORS ARE NOTHING NEW

Members of Race Have Long Held Important Place In World Theatricals

Afro-American

ALDRIDGE FIRST TRAGEDIAN

9/29/22

White Circuits Now Grabbing All the Better Class Colored Acts and Shows

By WILLIAM E. READY

(Theatrical Editor of the Afro)

To all save those theatregoers

who take more than passing interest in theatrical things, the commanding place that colored performers and colored shows have reached during the past few years and particularly during the past two seasons on the white stage, so to speak, will appear as only one more instance of the remarkable advance the race has made on the road to culture since the War of Manumission.

As a matter of fact, the latter is the case; however, as a matter of record, members of the race have been identified with the theatre in a manner which served to invite more than passing notice from a period which antedates the war of liberation. The most notable personage of colored who gained such prominence during the period in question was Ira Aldrich who was born in Belair, Md., 1804.

Frank J. Wilstach writing in THE WORLD (N. Y.); not long ago said that when the history of the Negro theatre comes to be written, "his (Aldrich) astonishing career will hold a most important place." The most famous role that Aldrich was identified with was "Othello" the immortal Shakesperean tragedy of the "eternal triangle."

Aldrich made his theatrical debut in London and toured the British Isles and the Continent. How splendid his art was may be gained from the fact that such important white theatrical stars as Ellen Tree and Madge Robertson, the latter who later became famous as the distaff half of "The Kendalls" whose fame was added to by an American invasion (if we are not mistaken) were Desdemonas to his Othello.

Another instance of the ante-bellum period was an organization of singers billed as "The Seven Slaves" who travelled through the North as early as 1858, later going to Europe. Coming on down through the years, we find innumerable singing and minstrel organizations, which gained more or less fame as entertainers par excellence and which finally found their sublimation in the Williams and Walker shows, which in turn found its apotheosis, so to speak, in the elevation of the late Bert Williams to stellar honors in Ziegfeld's "Follies."

White Patronage Demanding Colored Shows

Everyone who follows the doings of the theatrical world if only casually, knows of the great success that "Shuffle Along," "Strut Miss Lizzie" and "The Plantation Revue" have made in the Metropolis during the past season. So phenomenal in fact that one of the composers of this year's vintage of the 'Follies" found inspiration therein for a song number: "Broadway Is Growing Darker Every Day" which is one of the biggest hits of the latter show.

The news is now current in theatrical circles that other colored shows are being groomed for "the great white way." And this isn't all. According to VARIETY the producers seemingly are of the belief that there will not be enough of these shows to supply the demand and at least one producer is already taking steps to provide against this contingency; namely Gus Hill who is forming a show on the order of the above mentioned shows under the title "Jigtime" which will have a cast of all white players blocked up in jet and tan color.

Not only is the demand growing for the type of show just mentioned, but the variety managers are bidding for every high class colored turn that comes to their notice also. The writer was told this week by a manager of one of the local houses on the small colored circuit that it is impossible for him to get any of the better grade of acts that he formerly booked at his house for the simple reason that these acts have moved up into some one of the white circuits and that only the mediocre acts remain for the colored circuits.

Race Will Profit

This state of affairs in certain sections of the country has its drawbacks for the habitual theatregoer in that they are thus deprived of the pleasure of witnessing the work of the more talented among race players or if they witness them at all they must do so in restricted sections of the white theatres, usually the "peanut gallery."

But there is some solace in the sacrifice, for it is said that since the triumph of the colored shows in New York as mentioned above, there has been a very noticeable change of a more tolerant attitude, and a more respectful tone of the press in speaking of the race than obtained before in that city.

Here then is another opportunity of almost limitless possibilities for the colored performer to "do his and her bit" towards breaking down the barrier of inferiority, and the charges of inherent immorality and lack of integrity which have been levelled at the race in the past.

Especially, have the women performers a splendid opportunity to demonstrate to the white man seeking to despoil them, the fact that is known to all of us of color, that the colored woman even in public life is as sweet and as pure as those of any other race.

If these advantages which we have enumerated are brought about by the colored players' elevation into the white circuits leaving the small circuits to gather up the crumbs, so to speak, the sacrifice is a small one in comparison and every race-loving man and woman will make it willingly.

THE GREAT NEGRO ACTOR GILPIN

GLENS FALLS N Y STAR

SEPTEMBER 8, 1922

Something new and strange was presented local theatregoers last night when the great negro actor Charles Gilpin was at the Empire in Eugene O'Neill's famous play, "The Emperor Jones." Gilpin left no doubt that the distinction he has won as Brutus Jones entitles him to rank as one of the greatest actors and places him way in advance of any other actor of his color.

This play is extraordinary in theme and method. Save for the first and last of eight scenes there is no speaking part in it save Jones's. Through six scenes of agonizing despair the once proud and confident Emperor reels. His aplomb and self-reliance and smart superiority over the superstition and ignorance of the "black trash" over whom he has lorded it is beaten out of him blow by blow as he rushes wildly through the dark gruesome forest, to the ominous beating of the eternal tom-tom which tells of the savages gathering against him.

Down he goes, through all the weakness and crimes above which he had succeeded in pulling himself with what he considered the shrewdness of the white man. He sinks lower, past all the travail and woe of his enslaved ancestors and finally is back in spirit and mind to the time when the horrible medicine doctor shook his forbears and made them quake in deathly terror at the menace of the fearful crocodile's yawning jaws.

The slick, robbing, boastful ex-Pullman porter, who hoisted himself by his bootstraps to be emperor of the blacks on a savage island and to make his lowly subjects come in obedience when he rings a bell, can fall to no lower level of degradation, and he dies riddled by the silver bullets the ignorant blacks moulded to kill him because he bragged that none but a silver bullet could take his life.

Gilpin's wailing and despair echo the woes of his race. Ineffectual, primitive, losing his smartness and swashbuckling pride as rapidly as he shed his vainglorious boots and gold-braided military coat, his moans and sobs in the face of danger and the fear of the supernatural are like the lamentations of an Ethiopian Job.

Theatrical — 1922.
Individual Troupes.

N. Y. C. TRIBUNE
JUNE 25, 1922

The Theaters

By Percy Hammond

IMITATING, faintly, the prevalent fashion of the diarists, one records that one met Eddie Foy, between the acts of "Strut Miss Lizzie," Monday, June 17, and talked with him about negroid extravaganza, the anti-fats, floriculture in New Rochelle, and Mr. Foy's son Bryan. Mr. Foy said that he had begun lawsuits for $50,000 or so against Messrs. Gallagher and Shean, whose singing is a great hit in the Follies, the complaint being that their song is, in part, a product of young Bryan's lyre. In exchange for his work, Mr. Foy said, the performers gave Bryan only $50 and a matchbox—remuneration incommensurate, in his opinion, considering the stupendousness of the number's success. Mr. Foy continued: "They claim they have swept America 'like the radio,' and from the penury of $750 per week in obscure vaudeville, they were hoisted, by my boy's idea, to three times that stipend and the inestimable glory of appearances on Broadway. Yet they didn't even put Bryan's name on the program." Mr. Foy further remarked that although Bryan had never been to school, and that he played the piano with one finger only, he is able at an early age to earn $350 each week by his prowess as an entertainer.

* * *

Discussing the vogue of "colored shows" in this Capital, Mr. Foy deplored the tendency of negro artists to imitate white players and to follow the frayed traditions of the current musical exhibitions. "Of course," said he, "few of them are altogether negroes, but rather persons with 'colored blood in their veins,' the 'brown skins' of whom Ring Lardner used to sing, and the orange boys and girls of an ancestry even less routine. But they dance so well and with such gusto, and their voices have such a hearable quality, that I wish they would do things of their own." It might be said, here, that while Mr. Foy's thoughts are reported with considerable accuracy, his words are but feebly approximated. He would care to have the colored players omit some of their flabby ballads and night-songs, for material less stereotyped. "For instance," he said, "quaint melodies and sentiments like that chantey you hear crooned for a second in the first act:

"They say that a graveyard
Is a terrible place.
They put you in the ground
And throw dirt in your face."

* * *

From other interesting persons who joined our animated little symposium in front of the Times Square Theater, it was learned that Turner Layton, an author of "Strut Miss Lizzie," is one of those members of his race who do things. It seems that, as an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania, he has just been elected to an intercollegiate committee which has for its purpose the furtherance of better and finer musical education for negroes. Also that Raymond Hitchcock, a castaway on the alien shores of culture, has become settled in his new abode, and is now more intimate with the serious dancing in "Pin Wheel," if not more familiar. At the first performance of Michio Itow's reverent exposition of the higher choreography Mr. Hitchcock, accompanied by Frankie Fay, another droll averse to art, wandered to and fro with the cynical nonchalance of the ape in the Luxembourg. It was nice to hear the rumors of "Pin Wheel's" convalesence, for it was a sickly show on the first night, suffering from an indigestible combination of Visualized Rhythms and Mr. Hitchcock. It suggested two things, however—the fact that Mr. Hitchcock can be dull and the suspicion that only Russians should be allowed to dance.

* * *

Asked by a policeman to move on to a point less congested, our group was joined in our going-away by Henry B. Coleman, William J. Taylor, Cuthbert W. Johnson jr. and George Spelvin, who has changed his name to "Georges" since he has been cast by John Golden to impersonate a silent gendarme in "The Seventh Candle." Mr. Taylor was being discouraged over the defection of the Provincetown Players—"the most intrepid and sagacious of the drama's outposts"—when Mr. Spelvin interrupted with an inquiry, "Have you heard," said he, "why Hitchy left the Follies?" Everybody had heard, of course, but Mr. Spelvin proceeded. It is the function of the diarist to be complete. As Miss Marilyn Miller says in describing a moonlit night with Mr. Pickford, "it is the little things that count." Mr. Hitchcock's exit from the Follies, Mr. Spelvin told us again, was one of the most dignified quittings in the annals of the drama. "You are tardy, Mr. Hitchcock," suggested Mr. Wayburn, the lark-like producer of the Follies, as Mr. Hitchcock came belated to practice. "Does my unpunctuality annoy you, Mr. Wayburn?" said Mr. Hitchcock. "Annoy is too harsh a term," replied Mr. Wayburn. "I am depressed, rather, when you deprive me for so long a time of the sunshine of your presence. The ladies and gentlemen of my company are similarly dejected when you are not here." "Then," said Mr. Hitchcock, "perhaps it is better that I go." "Perhaps," Mr. Wayburn replied, and Mr. Hitchcock went.

* * *

Otherwise it was rather an eventful week for a new diarist. Lunched Tuesday at a table adjoining Colonel Huston, of the Yankees, who said he thought he could get me a visitor's card to the New York Athletic Club. "You are," he inquired, "a stranger here." . . . Telegraphed Ring Lardner at his Great Neck estate, and upon giving my name to Mrs. Lardner, who asked for it, was told that he was not there. . . . Met Grantland Rice in the Tribune office, and he was most cordial. "When are you taking your vacation, Mr. Hamilton?" said he, cordially, and I answered, "In July!" "That is too bad," he replied, "I was going to ask you to play golf with Jimmy Montague, Rube Goldberg and me during—did you say—July?" . . . Stood on the sidewalk and looked through the wire netting while F. P. A. played tennis with a celebrity whose name I should have recognized, but did not. . . . Dined at the Algonquin with Lorencz, the tailor, who makes clothes for Ernest Glendinning and Norman Trevor, and had an instructive chat with the coatroom lady about the headwear of the minor poets.

SPRINGFIELD MASS NEWS
APRIL 20, 1922

THE NEGRO ACTOR

Long ago the Negro proved his special ability as an entertainer, as singer, dancer and funster. But that he would be much further along the path to fame in the dramatic line if he he had an even chance with his white brother is proved by the powerful acting of Charles S. Gilpin in Eugene G. O'Neil's somber but strong play, "The Emperor Jones." Practically alone Gilpin carries the drama of O'Neil on his shoulders holding his audiences in a spell by the strength and vigor of his acting and the intelligence that he displays in the projection of the unusual character which O'Neil has drawn. It is quite a wonderful piece of work and the paeans of praise that have been accorded it by the most noted of dramatic critics have been deserved. They have shown no prejudice against the color of the actor, the critics with a single voice acclaiming his splendid performance as one of the great pieces of dramatic acting of the season.

And what of Gilpin's future and the future of other colored actors who may have ambitions but who have never had the chance to do what they have wanted to? It is known that the late Bert Williams grieved deeply because he was not permitted to indulge his ambition to do something besides entertain with song and dance. Gilpin is a graduate of the colored singing and dancing companies to which Williams once belonged. What a pity it will be if Gilpin is doomed to go back to where he came from.

The chances are, however, that it will be a long time before Gilpin or any other Negro actor has the chance that Gilpin is now enjoying. It was courageous of O'Neil to write such a role and it was courageous of the Provincetown Players to cast a Negro for it since it would be quite possible no doubt to secure a white actor who would be able to make a good impression in the role even if he did not reach the full hights attained by Gilpin.

BOSTON MASS POST
APRIL 11, 1922

GILPIN KEEPING PACE WITH FAME

Has Been Porter, Laundryman, Janitor, Barber and Printer, Besides Actor of Rare Ability

One month a Pullman porter; the next month the talk of New York, and now looked upon as one of the greatest artists of the American stage and a leader of his race. That's Charles Gilpin, the Negro actor who has created the role of the Emperor Jones in Eugene O'Neill's tragedy at the Park Square.

HAS MANY TRADES

And Gilpin hasn't changed to keep pace with fame. There are no airs, nor false conceits about him. As for his ability, he will tell you he's no better now than in the old days when he was a member of the Pekin Stock Company of Chicago, where they used to play everything from "Zaza" to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Success to him hasn't made any very deep impression; for Gilpin knows the world. Having been not only a porter and actor, but laundryman, janitor, barber and printer as well, he considers acting merely as a stepping stone to something better.

Yet this matter-of-fact man is in the judgment of the critics one of the big lights of the acting profession, having been selected as one of the 10 greatest contributors to the stage during the year 1921.

Honored by Drama League

College professors have written treatises upon his interpretation of O'Neill's gloomy character, and the play has been elevated from its birthplace in the little Greenwich Village theatre to a long run in New York and other cities.

Gilpin's character was typically illustrated by the famous incident which rose in connection with the Drama League dinner a year ago. He was one of the 10 chosen by the league, as has been said, to be honored at the dinner in recognition of their contribution to the American theatre. Someone started a protest on the grounds of color. There was a great furore. A newspaperman went to see Gilpin.

"I did not solicit an invitation to this affair," Gilpin told him, in substance. "And it is not my desire to offend anyone. I shall not attend if it is not the desire of those who are giving the dinner to have me present." But the Drama League board squelched the rumpus and asserted there would be no dinner without Gilpin, and so the affair went off as planned, without, so far as can be recorded, any artistic riot or damage to the stage.

Solution of Problem

Gilpin was also awarded last July the Spingarn medal, the highest honor the negroes of America can offer a member of their race. Gilpin is naturally a deep lover of his people; he lives with them; with their problems; and shares their hopes and ideals. "The solution to the negro problem, if there is a negro problem," he said in answer to a question, "is in letting the negro work it out for himself. He needs only time and education. When he is educated he will not need the white man for a father; for there is no white art, or white culture, or white dollar."

For many years before success came his way, Gilpin was on the stage intermittently.

Learned Printers' Trade

His first acquaintance with the theatre ended in 1896, when he found himself stranded in Charlottesburg, Va.; the manager of the show having been unable to resist the temptation provided by the first good house the show had ever secured. He was by profession a printer, having learned the trade in Richmond, Va.

He came north to Philadelphia with his family, and secured employment in a job shop. The next day he was informed that he would have to leave because the other men would not work with him. He then turned to a little colored paper, but the pay from that source was too irregular, and he did anything that came along; barbering, portering, janitoring, to make both ends meet.

Employment as a janitor gave him a little leisure and he used to do a turn on the side. Later he appeared with Williams & Walker, famous comedians, and then went out to Chicago to join the Pekin Stock Company. He expected to stay six weeks, but remained six years.

May White's Versatility

"It was a great organization," said Gilpin. "And it had the cleverest actress I ever saw, and I didn't say the cleverest colored actress, either. Her name was May White. She's married now and retired. But she could play absolutely anything, from eccentric comedy to emotional parts. That was great training. Not only did we play musical comedy and drama, but we built our own scenery, directed our own plays, did everything in connection with production.

"I shall never forget when we ranched out and put on our first drama. It was, of all things, 'Captain Swift,' a society piece. We sent invitations to the critics and colored professionals in town at the time. And they all came down to laugh at this company of Negro actors trying to play straight drama, but they remained to applaud. And after that we played drama as well as musical comedy."

Gilpin came back to New York in 1[illegible]3, and not long after founded the Charles S. Gilpin Stock Company at the Lafayette Theatre, with some of the old Pekin stars as a nucleus. He severed his connections with the organization in 1916, but he laid the foundation of three well-known Negro stock companies of today; two Lafayette Stock Companies, and the Dunbar Stock Company. Evelyn Ellis, Ida Anderson, and Andrew Bishop, stars of these companies, were all trained by Gilpin.

It was at this time that Gilpin went back to railroading. He only stayed a very short time, however, before he got into a disagreement with his immediate superior, and resigned his job.

In "Abraham Lincoln"

He went down to Virginia with a minstrel company, and while down there received a telegram from John Paul Jones, stage manager of "Abraham Lincoln." This resulted in Gilpin's selection to play the part of William Custis in the Drinkwater play during its New York engagement, in which he made a great impression.

The Provincetown Players saw Gilpin's work in "Abraham Lincoln," and did what a commercial manager would probably never do—took an uncommercial chance. Instead of securing a white actor to play the part of the Negro emperor, they put their faith in Gilpin, and Gilpin and the play have done more to make the Provincetown players famous than anything else that has happened to them.

TREASURY THEFTS ARE UNEARTHED

Bills in Swamp and River Part of Package Stolen Last Year

WASHINGTON, April 10.—Solution of the mystery of the finding, last Friday, of the package of $5 treasury bills in the Potomac River near the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, was announced tonight by Chief Moran of the Secret Service, who said that the bills were a part of a bundle of 1000 sheets, each containing four $5 notes, stolen from the bureau about a year ago.

CONFESSES BURYING BILLS

Clayton C. Dunn of Potomac, Va., a former watchman at the bureau, who was arrested in February for passing $1 bills raised to $5, Mr. Moran said, admitted burying a portion of the 1000 sheets in the swampy land near the river, and more of the bills were located there today by Samuel Shifleet of Potomac, who found the first package last week.

High treasury officials declared that the finding of the $5 bills in the Potomac River had no connection with the recent reorganization of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing through executive order of President Harding removing its [illegible] James L. Wilmeth, and other officials.

Also it was stated officially at the Treasury that the inventory of the bureau's stock now in progress, has so far disclosed no indication of any shortage or duplication of government securities on any large scale.

Despite the system of checks in force at the bureau, officials declared the human element made possible at times the disappearance of bills and stamps as in the case of Dunn, but such cases were as a rule quickly disposed of by the secret service.

THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

Theatrical—1923.

Individual Troupes, etc.

"THE UNLOVED WIFE" PROVES A SUCCESS

Presentation of Drama With Colored Cast Measures Up To White Casts In Same

EVELYN ELLIS THE STAR

Displays Emotional Power That Overwhelms Audience including Usually Noisy Gallery

By J. A. Jackson

George M. Gatts who has presented the "Unloved Wife" with a New York cast in the metropolis, and who has had no less than six white companies on the road in the piece during the season just closing, has had none that he may be more proud than the one he may be of his first Negro cast in the same piece.

Florence Mills May and Mr. Gatts were influenced into trying this experiment, until after they inspected their cast they admitted a complete ignorance of the Negro artist. Nevertheless they with either unusual luck, or careful discrimination gathered together as fine a group of race artists as could well be assembled.

The show had its initial performance at the Lafayette Theater New York on May 7, and it received the tribute of rapt attention from the audience including a usually very boisterous gallery, from the rise of the curtain. To retain the interest of these folks throughout a whole performance is in itself an exceptional accomplishment.

But one setting is used for the three acts. This by the way is an interior upon which careful attention to detail has been made.

Little Miss Bessie Allison dominates the first act in an invalid girl part that might have been written especially for her. After a lot of trials in musical comedy and other phases of the show business, she has really come into her own. Imagine the most efficient "Little Eva" you ever saw, grown a bit mature and you have a fair picture of the part this clever girl portrays.

Evelyn Ellis, who has the stellar role is just Evelyn with all that implies, casual thru the first act, ascending to emotional heights in the second, and simply overwhelming her audience in the last.

SHUFFLE ALONG STARS WIN RIGHT TO PLAY IN "SCANDAL'S" SHOW

Like Gallagher and Shean, who admitted they were only "ordinary" actors, Flournoy Miller and Aubrey Lyle, the colored comedians of "Shuffle Along," can now be counted as merely "ordinary" actors, performing parts well.

Supreme Court Justice William P. Burr recently handed down a decision refusing to restrain Miller and Lyle from joining George White's "Scandals" but issued a restraining order preventing them from being billed under "Shuffle Along of 1923-24." Meaning the case is to be heard quickly by a referee before the opening of the fall theatrical season, and while a referee hears testimony. Shuffle Along, Inc. which controls the show, is asked to put up a $5,000 bond.

Justice Burr says: "From the papers submitted, Lyle and Miller appear to me to be nothing more than ordinary actors performing parts well. I can see nothing 'special, unique and extraordinary' in their services. It cannot be said that their services cannot be replaced. As to the use of the words 'Shuffle Along,' there is enough here shown to justify an injunction."

NEW 'SHUFFLE ALONG' NOW IN REHEARSAL

By J. A. Jackson

Sissle and Blake who with John Scholes and Al Mayer of the original business organization that piloted "Shuffle Along" into fame, have begun rehearsals of the new edition of that production at the Fifteenth Regiment Armory in New York.

The show is scheduled to take the road on Aug. 27. At the time this is written, no names of principals other than Sissle and Blake was obtainable. However it is supposed that Lottie Gee will be with them, and Theresa Brooks is said to have been contracted, as has the Four Harmony Kings.

The show will be built around a group now working under Mr Sissles direction as a floor show at the Marne Garden in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

NEW YORK HERALD
APRIL 4, 1923

LONDON BOTH CHEERS AND BOOS NEGRO SHOW

De Courville's U. S. Importation Gets Mixed Reception.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK HERALD.
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New York Herald Bureau,
London, April 4 (Wednesday)

Albert de Courville's Anglo-American negro production, "Rainbow," presented at the Empire last night had a remarkable finale. The curtain descended amid cheers and booing, and the American composer and author made a speech of thanks. More cheers and boos followed, with shouts for De Courville. Then from the wings came an agitated figure in evening clothes.

"Ladies and gentleman," he said, "I was engaged as the low comedian in this show, but not given a chance." Every one thought it a belated joke, until the horrified look on the faces of the company proved that the man was an intruder. Down came the curtain, but the man was in front of it. It rose again, hands reached for him, and he was carried off. De Courville apologized for the contretemps, only to be greeted with cries of "Send the niggers back!"

The critics generally agree that the production is a scenic triumph, but of the company one reviewer says: "It's a pity the producer has gone so far to get so little talent of a degree that is not plentiful in England." Another says; "One feels that the trombone is the only suitable instrument for recording one's impressions."

The *Daily Mail* says: "Grace Hayes, an American comedienne, with a fascinating impertinence, stood out in the cast." The *Daily Telegraph* says: "A spectacle of rare beauty and exquisite taste, combined with an entertainment in which fun, gayety and melody are pleasantly blended."

NEGRO ARTISTS IN LONDON.

Mr. Charles B. Cochran has deservedly created the reputation for himself amongst London's leading entrepreneurs, that he knows exactly what the public requires to be entertained—hence the almost proverbial success of the musical and dramatic attractions he presents at the half a dozen theatres he controls in the West End. In "DOVER STREET TO DIXIE," he has brought us a revue which is truly sparkling from start to end, and which in its opening half gives such great artists as Miss Odette Myrtil and Stanley Lupino—who, along with George Robey—is generally viewed as Dan Leno's real successor—the fullest opportunities for fine work. However, the real object of this brief survey of the clever Revue, which has drawn all London to Piccadilly Circus for the last two or three months is however to give our West African readers an idea of the keen appreciation the British playgoers shows for clever artists entertaining him, regardless of their race or colour. There is certainly something very sympathetic and tense in the unique manner Florence Mills presents to us the songs and life of the Darkies in the United States. In the second part entitled "Away Down South —which has several

MISS FLORENCE MILLS
as she appears when singing "The Sleeping Hills of Tennessee."

real musical gems, she is most ably assisted by Miss Edith Wilson, another clever coloured Contralto, whilst the "Georgia Peaches" and "Dixie Vamps" must be heard and seen to fully appreciate the exceptional talent, latent and developed to such keen artistic perfection in these coloured American visitors. To call them Negro would not in this case be correct, though perhaps a few members of Vodery's clever Plantation Orchestra show the pure characteristics of the race. Certainly Florence Mills and Edith Wilson, and the "Dixie Vamps" in particular could easily pass in any Southern European country without being recognised as belonging to the aborigines race of Africa, which is so rapidly and rightly emancipating itself to the higher levels of Caucasian culture. A visit to "DOVER STREET TO DIXIE" is an educational artistic and sympathetic treat of high degree, and we can only be grateful to Charles Cochran almost eerily gifted in his selection of true artistic talent for the excellent show he is providing us with at the London Pavilion to-day.

Jewels in Ethiope's Ear

By JOHN CORBIN.

THE problem of the Ethiopian Art Theatre will be considerably less knotty if we dispose at the outset of its sociological phase. Here nothing but praise is due. Thanks to the ignorance and perversity of our ancestors, we have among us millions of fellow creatures whom we have solemnly declared our political equals, whom our religion bids us to treat as brothers—but whom, in actual fact, we very generally disfranchise, and everywhere exclude from social converse. During the two generations since the Civil War we have found no way out of that gigantic paradox, that monstrous inequity. Democratic institutions are flouted and the gospel of brotherhood reduced to a flagrant absurdity.

What remains? In Chicago, where the immigration of Southern negroes has developed new dangers, a group of public-spirited citizens has attempted a new palliative. Many of these American pariahs have genuine artistic intelligence, a ripe mimetic faculty and, above all, an abundance of humor and high spirits. Cultivate these, give them a normal and fortunate expression, and we provide an outlet for forces that otherwise might turn to evil ends. What is quite as much to the point, we detach ourselves from the historic muddle, making a sincere and practical approach upon a problem to which hitherto we have so largely applied vague theory and blind dogma. The idea behind the Ethiopian Art Theatre is psychologically sound and practically constructive. It proposes in the sphere of art what Booker Washington proposed in the sphere of industry, delving beneath superficial symptoms to vital causes:

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The Leopard and His Spots.

When we face the artistic accomplishment, which primarily concern us here, a doubt arises. To begin with, those who expect the barbaric splendor of "a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear" will be disappointed. The complexions of the company run through the lighter shades of café au lait; several of the abler players might easily pass for white. Nor are these Ethiopians powerless to change their skins. Where a darker hue is requisite, they employ walnut stain. Sociologically the situation is explainable. The mental testers have found that negro intelligence increases with the admixture of white blood, and the director of this theatre, Mr. Raymond

O'Neil, seems to have come to the same conclusion with regard to artistic talent. It is among quadroons and octoroons, moreover, that the racial discrimination is most sorely felt and bitterly resented. Things are as they are. But the consequence is confusing. What is described as from darkest Africa is in reality of frosty Caucasus, almost imperceptibly negroid.

The fact remains, however, that these players are at their best when depicting scenes of American negro life—at their best, that is, from the point of view of the Caucasians who mainly compose their audiences. "The Chip Woman's Fortune," which is a curtain raiser for both "Salome" and "The Comedy of Errors," is an unaffected and wholly convincing transcript of everyday character. No one is glorified or otherwise tricked out to please; no one is blackened to serve as a "dramatic" contrast. I am referring, of course, to points of essential character, not to that matter of walnut stain. "The Chip Woman" has earned her keep in Silas's household by collecting unconsidered trifles of fuel from street and alley, and by caring for his invalid wife. But Silas has lost his job, and unless payments are made on his adored Victrola it will be taken from him. He has discovered that the Chip Woman has a little hoard and asks her to help him. But the money is intended for a son who has been in jail and whose return the Chip Woman is expecting. While they are discussing the matter over so reasonably and humanly the "jail bird" comes, and turns out to be also a good sort, though rather too ready with his fists. The Victrola man is paid and the play ends with a burst of ragtime dancing, in which even the decrepit Chip Woman joins. That is all, except that Willis Richardson has limned half a dozen characters candidly, sympathetically, truly.

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"Salome."

When Mr. O'Neil casts his so-called Ethiopians as the white folk they so nearly are, a strain develops which may be illogical, but is none the less a strain. In the case of "Salome" the nature of the play doubtless has a part. One may deprecate the first decision of the authorities at the Metropolitan in forbidding Strauss's opera, and likewise Mayor Curley's recent ban on Mr. O'Neil's production in Boston. Such censorship defeats its own ends. Being contrary to our national love of freedom, it serves mainly to advertise and create a demand for the forbidden fruit—which seldom remains forbidden. But it does not follow that to produce "Salome" is laudable, and especially in the case of an organization that is ostensibly artistic and social. Whatever may be the artistic value of Oscar Wilde's artistic vagaries, they are ill adapted to the purpose of affording an unfortunately suppressed people a wit to some outlet for their emotions.

Mr. O'Neil's purpose was doubtless to display the virtuosity of his company. In that he was measurably successful. The performance as a whole was dignified and impressive. The voices of the company especially were laudable, clothing the lines with vigor and rich color. Except for an occasional Middle-Western inflection, such as "fawr-rust" for "forest," the pronunciation was impeccable. As Salome, Evelyn Preer was, in the true sense of the word, adequate. She rose to every requirement. In the final scene, when she mumbled and caressed the Prophet's head, she neither shirked nor overemphasized perverted passion. But she was quite without the distinction of great art, which alone can compensate for such an exhibition. And, if the whole truth be told, the fact that the play was performed by negroes, performed with an ostensibly philanthropic purpose, added a peculiarly poignant touch of distrust.

This was not in any sense attributable to Miss Preer, who never suggested the negress. It was attributable to the occasion as a whole, and especially—by a strange paradox—to a performance which, in itself, stood head and shoulders above all others, being the only one that was touched with histrionic genius. The Herod of Sidney Kirkpatrick was essentially and powerfully tragic—and no less essentially and powerfully Ethiopian. As this king watched the development of Salome's sadistic purposes his distorted features and fascinated eyes showed a horror and revolt that were not so much moral and religious—even moral and religious in the crude manner of Herod Antipas—as they were expressions of the savage heart of darkness, of fetich-worship and devil-fears. Granted this alien inspiration, Mr. Kirkpatrick was thoroughly the artist. Seldom on any stage has there been a more torrential flood of words, more deeply felt and justly phrased, than in his final entreating of Salome. In his other rôles he is similarly admirable. In Miss Preer's comedy parts she is exaggerated and ineffective; but Mr. Kirkpatrick has revealed the sure touch not only in his Herod but in his Silas of "The Chip Woman" and in his Syracusan merchant of "The Comedy of Errors." Yet when he is stirred to the depths it is the spirit of the jungle that finds utterance.

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Max Reinhardt Jazzed.

That Mr. O'Neil recognizes this negroid undertone in his company is evident in his production of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors." As his program states, it is "à la jazz." In one sense the device is not new. When Max Reinhardt produced "The Taming of the Shrew" in 1909 he sought an escape from the broadly farcical plot and ungentle action by exaggerating both. He presented the play as if produced in the supposedly crude Elizabethan manner by a company of blundering barnstormers. I have not had the luck to be in Berlin when his "Shrew" was given; but any one who is familiar with his manipulation of actors and his mastery of grotesque humors, as for example in "Sumurun," will easily credit Siegfried Jacobsohn's statement that, by thus redoubling absurdity, Reinhardt lifted the action out of the world of reality and into the higher sphere of make-believe, of imagination, of the fairy tale and the dream.

This is what Mr. O'Neil, who has studied in Berlin, has attempted to do with "The Comedy of Errors." The action takes place on a rude platform in a circus tent and the absurd scenes are shifted by clowns under the crack of the ringmaster's whip. A jazz band plays, not only for the scene shifters but for Dromio himself when he is most furiously clowning. Several of the leading characters are broadly burlesqued. The Duke of Ephesus becomes a squeaking mandarin and the Sheriff a doddering booby. But somehow the pinnacles of the higher fancy remain unscaled. One is potently reminded of Jacobsohn's counsel to other dramatic producers: "Be a man and don't imitate Reinhardt—unless you have his wit, his spirit, his sleight of hand and, above all, his phantasy."

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Two Dromios in One.

To one of the Ethiope Shakespeareans we owe a debt of gratitude. Charles Olden, who "doubled" the two Dromios, has the makings of a genuine Shakespearean clown. Nothing is more disillusioning than such a low comedy part miscast—unless it be an entire Shakespearean play misproduced. In such cases the sapient reflect that Shakespeare's humor is obsolete and most of his plays quite bad. Among the many purported clowns of recent years, only two have had the gift of Will Kemp and other nameless low comedians of the Globe: Lucian Weber, who was in Jacques Copeau's "Twelfth Night," and George Hassell, who was the butler Stephano in the Drama Society production of "The Tempest" in 1916. Mr. Olden has the secret of this strange craft, which is the secret of being born homely and sympathetic, with flights of imaginative dullness and hooby wit. Is there some strange kinship between Bully Bottom and the Ethiope mentality? This much seems certain: in a production of any general merit, Mr. Olden would have made his mark.

Negro as Dramatic Artist Finds Opportunity at Last

N Y C WORLD
MAY 13, 1923

Ethiopian Players' Little Theatre Movement Brings Pullman Porters, Minstrel Men and Stock Players Into First Organization of Its Kind.

THE story of Gilpin of "Emperor Jones," who found that a Negro had freer opportunities as a Pullman porter than as a gifted actor, is the common experience of every Negro who aspires to a place in the theatre—certainly in the dramatic theatre.

What becomes of talent and beauty and temperament among Negroes then? Raymond O'Neil, who founded the Ethiopian Art Theatre, which presented "Salome" last week and which will present "The Comedy of Errors" next week at the Frazee Theatre, saw it running to waste on every hand. He found Evelyn Preer, on whose beauty and power as "Salome" few have failed to comment, doing eccentric impersonations with an organization called the Lady Minstrels, on Chicago's South Side. She had played for a season with a Negro dramatic stock company which reproduced Broadway successes and which had finally died of inanition, and that was the beginning and the end of any opportunity to enter the dramatic theatre for a gifted and talented person of her color. So she went back to eccentric impersonation, and, bitter with discouragement, was ruminating on learning a trade and giving up the theatre altogether when O'Neil found her.

"What trade?" she was asked.

"Oh, hair work, I suppose," she answered, a little harshly.

Laura Bowman, who plays Herodias, went abroad twenty-four years ago with Williams and Walker in "In Dahomey," and remained after that company finished its tour. She remained abroad for fourteen years, playing in the Continental music halls until the war broke out. In that time she gave thought to what might be her future if she went home, and she learned lace-making. When she came back the chain of Lafayette stock companies in the Negro quarters of various cities was formed, and she became a member of the company which included Gilpin and a number of the members of the present Negro company. When that disbanded O'Neil picked her for his company, and the lace-making is postponed for a little while.

Sydney Kirkpatrick, who plays Herod, is an old-time minstrel man. And though he loves the grandiloquence of the dramatic role in Wilde's play, he loves the sound of the drum and the trombone too. He began his dramatic experience as the pickaninny who leads in the dogs in "Uncle Tom," and returned to the dramatic stage as leading character actor with the Lafayette stock company.

Charles Olden, who plays Dromio in the Shakespearian comedy, is by trade a tailor, but he has upon occasions made a success as a barber during the arid stretches of his dramatic career. O'Neil found him singing and dancing in a black-and-tan cafe in Chicago.

Solomon Bruce, who plays the prophet Jokanaan in "Salome," is a Post Office employee. He has never dared to give up a good regular position for a precarious life on the stage, and this leave of absence which enabled him to come with the company to New York is the first that he has asked for in seventeen years of Government service. He had a fine standing in the Negro quarters for his semi-professional work as a dramatic reader. He employed a gorgeous voice in reading Poe and Dickens and Mark Twain, and O'Neil, detecting in it a fine dramatic sense, acquired him for his company.

There are two who have worked as Pullman porters, an ex-waiter and a South American Negro of the leisure class who speaks four languages. Nearly all the rest have been itinerant cabaret and cafe entertainers. All of them sing and most of them dance, and O'Neil feels that they have the graces, the intelligence and the potentialities which, persuasively shown, will give the Negro a stake in the dramatic theatre.

Theatrical — 1923.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

N Y C WORLD
MAY 20, 1923

Seeing Things at Night

by Heywood Broun

IN DISCUSSING various phases of the Negro problem we run into people who say, "But, of course, you must admit that the Negro race is mentally inferior?" In such cases we always dodge, because, as a matter of fact, we have no statistics (poor things at best) at our fingertips and we know nothing about it.

Fortunately, the question of the Negro's potentialities in the theatre is not a matter of tables of figures or anything like that, and so we can speak freely. The Negro comes to the arts with one distinct advantage. All white peoples have been articulate for so long a time that they are threatened with the danger of talking themselves out. The subject matter with which art may deal is vast, but it is something less than infinite. But here at the present time there lies in the middle of our white civilization a great island which is almost unexplored, as far as its artistic possibilities go. To be sure, we are dealing in surmise, but as a betting proposition we should like to wager that within a hundred years genius will arise in one form or another from the lush tangle of Negro life.

Almost every condition favors such a development. There has been the long silence of contemplation. We are proceeding on the assumption that we can find general agreement for the statement that while black men of high talent have already appeared, there has been as yet no authentic genius produced from that race in America. Even those who feel that they have convincing figures to prove the mental inferiority of the race have by no means provided against the popping up of genius. The comparative mental equipment of the contiguous races is irrelevant for the genius is always a sport. He rises above the level of his own, and he may just as readily overtop competitors in a class, a nation or a race which averages above the level of his springboard. The difficulties which persecution and neglect rear against the Negro of high talents are fuel for genius. Out of unhappiness and pressure comes the finest expression of which man is capable.

There seems to be a pretty general feeling that music is the field in which the Negro has the best chance to distinguish himself, but we rather think it is more likely to be the drama. There are more monuments to great men in the theatre than elsewhere. The newcomer must pick his way between the stones as best he can. Since he cannot climb over the shoulders of Shakespeare, he must go round about. But the Negro dramatist may well say, "These are not my dead. I owe no allegiance to them." He can make his own tradition. He can break the long silence.

The very fact that the Negro in the theatre is largely a potential rather than an arrived force makes the task of the critic difficult. There is the danger that he may announce the coming of giants before their footsteps have sounded. We have before us an article by Theodore Dreiser about the Ethiopian Art Theatre's production of "Salome," in which he says: "Nowhere else have I seen the equal of their performance, either technically or interpretively." This is Mr. Dreiser's opinion, to which his right is unquestioned, but it is equally our right to say that we think it a ridiculous piece of critical judgment. We mean that it seems to us that Mr. Dreiser has prostrated himself before the pretty good.

In commenting on the reviews which the players received from the New York critics, Mr. Dreiser says: "They fell into the hands of a body of critics either prejudiced by their color or artistically not equipped to deal with a performance of such genuine merit."

The question of equipment we will waive, but we deny that the critics of New York are prejudiced against Negro performers. The thing is more subtle than that, for we are willing to grant that the colored actor appears at a certain disadvantage. It is not that the critics are unfair to him. Much worse than that, they are kind. Instead of saying out and out "Salome was a dull performance," it is hard to resist the temptation of saying, "It was an excellent performance—for Negroes."

Possibly our point is not altogether well taken, for patronization may well be a phase of prejudice. And yet Negro performers have at times profited financially, although not artistically, by these kind notices. We think that Bert Williams was a player of exceptional ability. This ability may even have been potential genius, but it never took Williams as high as that. Critics were too kind to him. There were several seasons in which his material was poor and his work indifferent, but newspaper reviewers continued to hail him as the funniest of men. The fact that he was a colored performer made an irresistible appeal to the sentimentality of many a critic.

On the whole, it is not the reviewers but the theatre-going public which raises up the greatest difficulties against the progress of the Negro on the stage. It is the public—white and black—which seems to have decreed that the Negro must always be a funny man. There is almost nothing in all American dramatic literature in which the Negro is not utilized for comic purposes. Practically the only serious scene allowed to him is the one in which the old family retainer places one hand over his kidneys and says that the young master may have his humble savings if they will be of any use to him. The few attempts to treat Negro life more seriously have almost invariably failed.

There should not be any fixed rule which says that a Negro company shall give only plays about Negroes. In theory, there is no boundary line of color in art. But certain practical difficulties remain. A few seasons ago the Lafayette Stock Company in Harlem played "Potash and Perlmutter" and, without having seen it, we are willing to hazard the opinion that the experiment can hardly have been everything to be desired.

Within the last five or six years we have seen two performances by Negroes which seemed to us absolutely of the first rank. We are thinking of Charles Gilpin in "The Emperor Jones" and Opal Cooper in Ridgley Torrence's one-act play, "The Rider of Dreams." The Ethiopian Art Theatre, in our opinion, has not yet produced anybody worthy to stand with these two.

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New Plays

Runnin' Wild. This latest sample from Negroland has all the characteristics of an explosion. It is shattering to the ear, elusive to the eye and utterly devastating to the theories of musical comedy. The scenery, the costumes, the situations are all persevering primitives. The plot is a frankly threadbare clothesline on which to pin the songs and dances. The voices are powerful but rather inclined to bolt and run away among the gallery rafters. But even rags for costumes, a popular song for a plot, and a phonograph for music would be overlooked in view of the dancing and the vast enthusiasm of the players. Never before has so much energy been concentrated on a single stage. A congress of oriental dervishes would seem static in comparison. In addition, the stars, Miller and Lyles, are boisterously competent comedians. The production is on a par with that sire of colored shows, *Shuffle Along*.

New York, May 25.—The larity of the "high faller" sho the Rialto upset the theories of wisest theatrical prophets. Begin with the [illegible] run of "Shuf Along" there have been eight all c ored successful productions in Ma hattan.

It was five years ago George Jean Nathan, perhaps the shrewdest of critics, was summoned by a musical show producer to a luncheon at Delmonico's. The producer's brand of extravaganza was showing signs of decadence.

Nathan suggested he produce an all colored revue. The producer declared the public would never stand for it. So he continued in his accustomed way until his place of entertainment closed on account of a lack of patronage.

The public has the idea that the colored performers were picked from Harlem's Black Belt haphazardly. And it is amazed at the stage technique displayed. The truth is most of the successful colored players have had long experience.

Florence Mills played in vaudeville for eight years, and Sissle and Blake toured with "tent troupes" for many seasons. Many others were with Williams and Walker and other all colored touring companies.

The next inevitable step, according to Nathan, in musical comedy is the appearance of all Japanese and Chinese choruses. He believes this will come in the next few years. A Japanese girl vaudeville act has already created a furore.

The salaries now being paid some of the more expert colored players run into four figures. One quadroon is drawing $1,500 a week, and nearly all have prospects of London engagements, their popularity in Britain being usually high.

PHILADELPHIA PA. N. AMER
MAY 22 1923

DUNBAR

Ethiopian Art Theater in Unusual Production of 'Salome'

Preceded by a snappy orchestra overture, in which a slide trombone played tricks, Oscar Wilde's tragedy "Salome" was presented last night at the Dunbar by negro players of the Ethiopian Art Theater. The prelude unfortunately stirred the expectations of a part of the audience that "Salome" was to be a somewhat jazzier spectacle than the somberly beautiful one it proved. Those of the onlookers who were disappointed shuffled restlessly in their seats, coughed, laughed and alas only too few of them went out.

But the soft-voiced negro players thrillingly in earnest, carried the drama to a strangely impressive close, in which the Salome of Evelyn Preer ond the Herod of Sidney Kirkpatrick stepped out from the poetic dusk of the legend.

Miss Preer, startlingly white in the blue half light in which most of the stage was shrouded thruout the piece, had all the sinuous allurement of the story princess. Her scene with the prophet, when she writhed almost the length of the stage to touch him, was one of the dramatic moments. Her voice was full and deep, but carefully modulated, except at the shrieking climax. Her articulation was perfect. Others of the players were not so easily heard.

Mr. Kirkpatrick was best in his exquisite pleading with the dancer. As king he lacked the power, majesty, hard cruelty of the traditional Herod. But his soft pleas, his tender attempts to win the princess, had a plaintive note that was not in the poetic lines. Perhaps it was a racial pathos. Certainly all thru the drama the

ame melancholy vocal character-
ic.

Of the other players, Laura Bowman, as the misunderstanding Herodias, gave a notable performance. Arthur Ray, in the role of the young Syrian, had one of the most pleasing voices in the cast.

Miss Preer gave the famous dance to the accompaniment of a single tambourine. The stage was almost dark, save for the spotlight on the king and queen. And thru this strange light Salome's pale arms and legs moved in uncanny, syncopated rhythm. Her long recitative to the head of the prophet was spoken amid moanings and wailings off-stage.

There was an opportunity for an interesting comparison between the Salome of Miss Preer and those of Mary Garden and Alla Nazimova, in which Miss Preer did not greatly suffer.

The Ethiopian Art Theater is a company of talented players, who, under the direction of Raymond O'Neil, are seeking to give something to the American drama. Perhaps its mission would be better fulfilled if it tried to develop its own folk plays, avoiding poetic tragedies of other peoples. Certainly the one-act playlet, "The Chip-Woman's Fortune," which was the curtain-raiser to "Salome," had a real life interest which the ambitious Wilde piece lacked.

NEGRO ARTISTS NOT WANTED IN LONDON

Afro-American's

Hannen Swaffer Bitterly Opposes Engagement Of Florence Mills And Her Revue

Baltimore, Md.
4-6-23

CALLS PLAYERS IGNORANT

English Writer Shows Amazing Ignorance Of Our Stage Progress

(Hannen Swaffer in Daily Graphic London, Eng., Mar. 6, 1923)

The all-black cabaret which staged at the Empire, is to be the great attraction of the Darker London season, will be as black as night.

(Florence Mills Plantation Revue from N. Y.)

Indeed, Robert Law, the scenic artist, who is to paint a plantation scene so that niggers can act in front of it, said yesterday that they are even bringing over a black cook! So "Aunt Jemima" of Virginia, the Coal-Black Mammy of all time will make waffles which he said, "You could eat forever and still want more."

* * * * *

Imported Black

"We think it would be a disgrace to both theatrical and music-hall performers if permission were granted to exploit imported black men and women in this way" said Variety Artists Federation, "while hundreds of talented British artists are on the verge of want through lack of engagements.

"Over 2,000 variety artists are unemployed in England." said Mr. Voyce, "and the stories I hear every day are heart-rending. When employed, these artists earn anything from £10 a week to £100 a week; but so bad is the shortage of money in England, that no fewer than 250 of the smaller music-halls which used to employ four variety acts are now saving money by showing second-class pictures instead.

No Objections to White Americans

"We have no objections to American artists coming to England. In fact, ninety per cent of those who come here join our federation and are welcome. There are also in England negro turns, who behave themselves and keep their place. But we view with the greatest apprehension a cabaret where black artists would actually mix with white folk at the tables.

"There are enough here now without bringing over any more foreign turns which will make our labor market even worse than it is.

The Nigger Problem

I did not speak to many managers about the nigger problem, because most of them are very cautious when entertainment policy is discussed. But J. A. E. Malone, of Grossmith and Malone, who is responsible for the all-black revue "Shuffle Along" eighteen months ago. But he would never dream of bringing black artists over to England. "I am surprised anybody has thought of it" he said.

Film producers won't have negroes in principal parts. "One Exciting Night," the new Griffith film to be produced at the New Oxford Theatre on Thursday has a negro part. So Griffith cast Porter Strong a white man for the part and made him black his face.

Negroes do not appear in films but only as waiters or a very minor part.

White actors would not act with them for one reason and for another there are no Negro actors of ability. They haven't enough intelligence. No white woman film actress would act in a scene where a negro had to touch her, or to make love to her, and if she did the film would be too revolting to show.

Even the black in the "Loves of Pharaoh," the German show, are really white.

Nigger Revues

"You are right and I am with you in your attack on nigger revues," said a big film man. 'I hope that any man who tries to foist black revues on the British public while white artists are on the verge of starvation, will lose his money. He is lowering the standard of entertainment'.

"The Negroes produced one good actor, Bert Williams. But he's dead now." said an American, staying at the Savoy Hotel. "He was liked because he knew his place and did not make himself aggressive. I like Negroes—as servants and as workers—but not as actors. Why have Negro actors when so many white people ca act so much better.

Note.—This is part of a bitter campaign that is being carried on to keep colored entertaineds from being engaged in the London theatres and other places of amusement, having it's genesis in the great success that such organizations as Will Marion Cook's orchestra and other musical organizations have achieved in London and other European cities since the war, and incidentally, to head off if possible, the threatened invasion of "Shuffle Along", Florence Mills and the Plantation Revue and one or two other big all-colored musical revues.

Many Negroes in Movies

As to his charge concerning the employment of Negroes in the movies, he even shows deeper ignorance. A great number of Negroes have appeared on the films in support of white players, and they played important roles too. Among these, the most prominent is Noble Johnson, who as we recall played the chief "villian" in a num part,, that of a Mexican, in another of pictures; played the star played "Friday" the second principal role in "Robinson Crusoe" and before any of the foregoing, he played a leading role with Marie Walcamp in a serial, where he not only touched her, but we remember that on at least one occasion, he rescued her and carried her in his arms.

N Y C TELEGRAM
MAY 6, 1923

Ethiopian Art at Frazee Theatre

The Ethiopian Art Theatre, a company of negro players, will open a repertory season at the Frazee Theatre tomorrow evening, with Oscar Wilde's "Salome" and a one-act play of negro life, "The Chip-Woman's Fortune," written by Willis Richardson, a negro.

The company, which comes from Chicago with its founder and director, Raymond O'Neil, was seen at a theatre in the negro quarter there by H. H. Frazee, the Broadway manager, who was roused to such an interest by the sight of these players that he invited them to come to New York. Their repertory, besides the two opening plays, consists of Moliere's "The Follies of Scapin," "George," a modern expressionistic play from the German by Buechner, and two Shakespearian plays, "The Comedy of Errors" and "The Taming of the Shrew," and "Everyman."

Rumors of the remarkable quality of these players, their unique spontaneity, their beauty of voice and their emotional power, have reached New York all the season. This is heightened by the story that O'Neil was invited to Chicago to found a white art theatre and abandoned the project to found an art theatre among the negroes. O'Neil, who is not himself a negro, comes from Cleveland. He has long been a student of the theatre. Some years ago he went abroad to study the Continental theatre, and worked with Jacques Copeau in Paris and Max Reinhardt in Berlin and returned with the definite notion of putting his ideas into practice in the art theatre movement here. He came to Chicago on this project, and while there he was struck by the amount of raw talent displayed by the negroes in their cafes and cabarets that was running to waste, the positive genius for the theatre that is unsued except in musical revue or in desultory singing and dancing, and became absorbed in the idea of finding an outlet for this rich emotional force in a legitimate theatre.

N Y C WORLD
MAY 6 1923

Negro Players Tackle Classic Dramatic Art

Strange Corners of the Country Yielded Colored Company Which Will Give Repertory at the Frazee Theatre.

THE company of Negro players, calling themselves the Ethiopian Art Theatre, who present at the Frazee Theatre to-morrow evening Wilde's "Salome" and "The Chip-Woman's Fortune," a play of Negro life written by Willis Richardson, a Negro, are the first of their race to cross in a company the threshhold of what is inexplicably called the "legitimate" theatre. They come with a repertory consisting of "The Comedy of Errors" and "Everyman," the first announced to take place in a circus tent and the second in a black-and-tan cabaret; "George," a modernist expressionist play from the German by Buechner, and Moliere's "The Follies of Scapin."

They come under the direction of Raymond O'Neil, who is not a Negro. Finding the little theatres of his native Cleveland a trifle airless, O'Neil left this country some years ago and went abroad to work with Copeau and Reinhardt, and, returning, saw potentialties for the theatre in the Negro.

This impulse toward expression, having no folk drama on which to rest, should make its first step on the broad base of the classics, O'Neil believed, and he found a great readiness among Negro actors to take this or any other means of entrance into the theatre. There is a well developed theatrical profession among Negroes, though it exists on even more sporadic work than our own. O'Neil found that he could have his pick of any, and at the lowest possible wage. He could start a Negro theatre with a sum that would make him independent of any benevolence.

The company numbers twenty-five. O'Neil gathered it by ranging far and wide through Chicago's black belt. All last summer and during the early fall he spent days and nights there, frequenting cabarets and cafes. He heard all the "readers" who have a celebrity on the South Side. He advertised in the Negro papers and was deluged with applications from every State in the South. He gathered his company by an inexhaustible process of weeding out.

The greater part of the company are professionals—either regularly or in an itinerant way. He found the leading comedian in a cabaret. He was a dancer and singer, who had never spoken a line on the stage, and he gave a performance of Moliere's "Scapin" that was rich with improvisations. The leading actress, the Salome of to-morrow's play, comes out of musical revue, with a short experience of stock in a local theatre—but she was at the point of giving up the stage in discouragement to learn a trade when O'Neil found her. One actor worked in the Chicago Post Office, several were sleeping car porters. A few have stuck to a purely professional career in the face of many difficulties, some have maintained a semi-professional avocation with bread-winning in some trade or business.

O'Neil is said to have observed on his fourth visit to the Plantation Revue that the Negro is the only primitive race that has not been destroyed by contact with civilization. He has adapted himself to the nervous tensity and complexity of white civilization and gone it one better, for he has given it a true staccato accent in jazz, and that with a pace and energy which white people cannot match. Who knows what racial idiom will come from this raw force in our theatre, or what will be the ultimate expression of a Negro folk theatre.

Theatrical—1923.

Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEGRO THEATRICAL INVASION OF EUROPE.

The invasion of the theatrical stage by colored performers which began with the production of "Shuffle Along," has been extended from New York to London and over to Paris. After the dissolving of the Williams & Walker and the Cole & Johnson Companies there followed a period of about ten years in which the Negro was almost completely kept off the stage, except in vaudeville houses. In the meantime Negro theatres sprang up all over the country and colored theatrical talent was generally employed in furnishing entertainment for strictly colored audiences. These Negro theatres raised up a new group of colored performers.

No colored company was given a chance on "Broadway" until the appearance of "Shuffle Along." The "Shuffle Along" people had to stoop to conquer, but they were confident that they had a great entertainment and if given a chance could make good. The did have a great entertainment and New York immediately recognized it, with the result that the play ran for more than a solid year on "Broadway," and that is a record equalled by very few white shows.

Since the success of "Shuffle Along" Broadway has not been without a colored show. There are now two in the city, one a musical comedy and the other a company of serious actors. A colored show now seems to be one of the necessary features of Broadway night life.

And now the invasion has reached over to Lodon and Paris. Florence Mills, who made herself famous overnight with "Shuffle Along," has gone to London with the "Plantation Revue." The London manager who took her and her company over stated that he considered Miss Mills one of the finest musical comedy artists in the world; that she could be mentioned in the same breath with Yvette Guilbert and Marie Lloyd.

Some dispatches from London indicate that there will be the same sort of opposition to colored theatrical performers as there has been to the colored musicians. One dispatch stated that English actors out of work will protest against the importation of Negro performers.

A dispatch from Paris states that "The Emperor Jones" will be produced on June 3. A colored actor named Bengelia will play the part which was made famous by Mr. Charles Gilpin in this country. Mr. Bengelia is said to be the only serious Negro actor in Europe. He is a native of Africa but is reported as having a good education and speaking refined French. He has played with great success a number of parts in productions under the manager of the famous Odeon Theatre.

We hope that this invasion of Europe will be as successful as it has been in New York.

Plays and Players

"The Mountebank," the play made from the novel of W. J. Locke, now at the Lyceum, will be reviewed tomorrow.

"The Ethiopian Art Theatre" Has Very Little to Do With a Real Negro Theatre.

N Y C CALL
MAY 11, 1923

By ANITA BLOCK.

Once again the warm well-wisher of the Negro, who wants him to scale the heights of every artistic and intellectual achievement and who admires his unique racial gifts and talents, is doomed to disappointment. For this new all-colored company, which comes to the Frazee Theatre from Chicago by way of the Lafayette in Harlem, once more gives no physical indication of being a Negro company, and in the presentation of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" every effort is made (and quite comprehensively so) to have the principals at any rate, appear as much like members of the white race as possible.

And how indeed could it be otherwise without making the entire proceeding ridiculous? Oscar Wilde happened to write his play about white people, and for Herod to say repeatedly of a black or even a brown Salome, "How pale the princess looks tonight! Never have I seen her look so pale," would scarcely be calculated to make even the most sympathetic audience take the tragedy seriously. Therefore it becomes necessary to make Salome as undistinguishable from a white woman as possible, in order to preserve in the minds of the audience their long-accepted conviction that she was not a native princess of Ethiopia, but a princess of Judea. In short, it would be just as bad art to have white people presented on the stage as black, as it was perfect art to have the Emperor Jones played by a Negro. Because the Emperor Jones is a Negro, and John Gilpin therefore brought out in him a thousand little racial traits and gestures that a browned-up white actor would have forever missed. By the same sign, however, only Negroes made to look, as little like Negroes as possible could conceivably interpret, with any creation of illusion, white people, whether they be the Judeans of antiquity or the Venetians of Shakespeare, or the French of Moliere. To expect anything else, is as though we would expect a Jew, with the most pronounced racial characteristics, to play, as he was, the serious part of an Irishman in a serious play, instead of employing every trick of the art of makeup and acting to make him look and seem lie an Irishman.

No, a Negro theatre (and, let us pray, have the direct, honest title, instead of such highfalutin vagueness as an "Ethopian Art Theatre"), which so many of the true friends and admirers of the colored people would so heartily welcome, will never be realized, as long as Negroes think there is any art in looking like white people and acting the parts of white people in white people's plays about white people. To say that there is no race or color in art is true only when we interpret that truth in its larger spiritual aspects. But when we interpret it as a denial of the facts of race and color, it becomes merely ridiculous. Our colored friends have just as much right to make themselves look white and act the parts of white people as we have to brown or blacken white actors and make them act the parts of colored people. Only let us make it clear at the outset that that is not what we mean by the founding and development of a Negro theatre, a theatre to be devoted to the creation cultivation and intrpretation of genuine Negro folk-art, if we may use the term.

Fortunately the present bill of the Ethiopian Art Theatre is a perfect example of what the Negro theatre should and should not do. The first offering on its program is a little one-act play of Negro life written by a Negro, called "The Chip Woman's Fortune." It shows us a typical proletarian colored family, in its pitiful economic insecurity, heartbroken because the adored victrola is about to be taken away for non-payment of the instalments. They suspect old Aunt Nancy, who gathers up chips of wood and coal for a living, and to whom they have given a home in return for her devoted nursing of the sick wife, of having money hidden away; but she insists she must keep every cent of it for her boy, expected back that day from a stay in the "pen." How the released "jail-bird" gladly offers them what they need, in warm appreciation of their kindness to his "ole Hammy" while away, how the victrola remains and they all spontaneously "jazz" with joy," even the bent and white-haired old Aunt Nancy, finishes the homely little tale. But oh, what a gem it is, with its rich portrayal of Negro personality and psychology! What a picture we get of ambition and shiftlessness, kindliness and pugnaciousness, ignorance and keen intelligence, and of the unquenchable racial love of music and the dance, all in those few short moments! Here, in very truth, is the stuff out of which a national Negro theatre must be made, and its material, with all the Negro's struggles and strivings and manifold problems, is endless.

Of the production of "Salomé" we have little more to add to what we

BERTHA MANN
In "Whispering Wires," which still thrills at the Broadhurst.

ROBERT AMES
As the ne'er-do-well in "Icebound," the Pulitzer prize play at the Sam H Harris.

have said already. It does not interest us to see what a so-called Negro troupe can do with drama in which they have to play at being white, and it seems a matter of indifference to us whether they do it badly or well. Undeniably Sidney Kirkpatrick, who played Herod, is an unusually able actor, and Evelyn Preer, with her mervelous white body made a physically glorious Salome. But it was her acting as the sick wife, in a dirty calico wrapper, in the little Negro play that revealed her real acting ability.

The Ethiopian Art Theatre is unfortunately an attempt away from, rather than toward, the establishment of a real Negro theatre.

Dramatic Story of Success Of 'Shuffle Along' Told by Noble Sissle, Eubie Blake

9-22-23

Present Stars of Phenomenal All-Color Show Tell of Trials Before Play "Went Over"

From Detroit Time Piece.

The opening of the new Shuffle Along Co., by Sissle and Blake in Pittsburgh recently recalls to mind the fact of the wonderful success made by the old company consisting of Miller and Lyles, also Sissle and Blake.

These four Negroes, aided by Al Mayer, a white man, developed "Shuffle Along" from a troup playing one night stands and going hungry doing it to a production which has taken in gross receipts of $1,500,000 in two years.

Don't get the idea that "Shuffle Along" was started on a shoe string, for as the five men put it, "we didn't even have a shoe string." It was started on nothing, rehearsed on empty stomachs, taken on the road on promises, carried along on worthless checks and finally returned to New York with a deficit of $21,000.

The dramatic story of the success of "Shuffle Along" is also the narrative of the up-hill struggle of two young Negroes. Noble Sissle, who wrote the lyrics for the production and Eubie Blake, who wrote the music. In addition to writing the show, they have composed more than a score of popular songs. Blake is the "iron man" of the team and not only directs the orchestra, but plays the piano while doing so through the entire production. At one point he goes to the stage for a piano concert.

Sissle is 33 years old and was born in Indianapolis. He finished grade school and studied two years at Depau University. During summer vacations he trouped out with quartets and jubilee singers and got his early training at composing lyrics by writing parodies for football yells and songs.

Blake is 38 years old and can't remember when he could not play the piano. He was born in Baltimore and when a child could play by ear almost anything he heard someone else play. He graduated from the grade schools and then drove a doctor's carriage for $1.50 a week.

Played in Dance Hall.

"I got tired of driving that old carriage and got a job playing the piano in a dance hall," Blake said. "I could not read a note of music until after I was 25 years old. I married a competent musician and she taught me higher music."

Sissle and Blake met in the summer of 1915 in Baltimore. It was there they wrote that first song, "It's All Your Fault." They got $25 for it, which was split, fifty-fifty.

"After the summer season," began Sissle, taking up the narrative, "we were engaged in a dance hall where we met headliners and wrote songs for them. None of the songs were accepted.

"Blake had a local reputation and he stayed in Baltimore, conducting orchestras. I moved to Palm Beach as an entertainer. Some New York people who thought I was good told Jim Europe, the orchestra leader, about me and he gave me a job. I went to New York. Europe knew all about Blake and had been trying to get him, and we persuaded him to come to New York in the fall of 1916. At that time Europe was organizing his big band for Col. Hayward's Fifteenth Regiment of National Guards. I got into it. And then came the war and it caught me in the band. I went over with Hayward's 'Hell Fighters' and soon got out of the band and into the intelligence service. I came out with a have tail's commission.

"Blake, in the meantime, had stayed in New York and was looking out for Europe's interests—"

"Jim Europe's interest," interjected Blake. "Sissle here was looking out for the interests of Europe proper."

"Well, we got back in February, 1919," Sissle continued, "and Europe's band went on the tour which ended in Europe's death in Boston when a drummer stabbed him. Immediately after Blake and I teamed up again and spent eighteen months on the Keith circuit.

Met Miller and Lyle.

"In January, 1921 we participated in a benefit at a Negro theater in Philadelphia. Miller and Lyle were on the same bill. Then and there "Shuffle Along" was born. Blake and I had always wanted to take out a show, but needed a book. Miller and Lyle had taken out several, but had little success because they lacked original music.

"A short time later we were in New York looking for a cheap show that had failed. We intended to revamp it, use the lines prepared by Miller and Lyle, the music arranged by Blake and myself, stage it at a Negro theater and then call in the white managers to look it over. Miller and Lyle who had a lot of experience picking up cheap shows, were looking for one when they met Al Mayer. And at this point enter our friend and benefactor."

Mayer took up the story:

"I had always believed there was room for a good Negro show, but I had never found the show. I had taken out seven Negro productions and all were flops. But I saw the possibilities as outlined by Miller and Lyle, and Sissle and Blake, and got busy.

"We five agreed to go into partnership. Miller and Lyle were to arrange the lines, Blake and Sissle were to prepare the music and I was to handle the business end.

"Right here let me say ths for these four boys: There has never been a piece of paper between us. We have nothing but the pledged word of each other but that verbal contract is as good as gold. The profits are split five ways.

"To get back to my story. I knew that John Cort had the scenery and wardrobe of Eddie Leonard's show, 'Roly Boly Eyes.' I invited him to lunch. He accepted. I told him I would be back in thirty mintues and I went out and hocked my overcoat to get lunch money. I bought the lunch and offered to buy the stuff he had with notes. He surprised me by accepting. Now Sissle, tell him how you got the cast."

"There weer a lot of good Negro vaudeville acts to pick from," Sissle said. "The players knew they had little future in vaudeville because of their race and when we told them we had no money but would not take them farther than walking distance from New York, they agreed to gamble with us.

"We had planned to call our show 'The Mayor of Jimtown,' but decided that inasmuch as we were going to shuffle along on the road for a while before tackling New York, we would call it 'Shuffle Along.' The name stuck.

"We were to open in Trenton, but when we got to the Pennsylvania station Blake backed out."

"Do you blame me?" Blake asked. "I had nothing in my pockets but a railroad ticket to Trenton."

"We finally talked Blake into coming along," Sissle explained.

"And what a nightmare was Trenton," Mayer cut in. "After the bills were paid I lacked $20 of having enough to take the troupe to Washington but I finally found an usher who was saving for a new suit and upon my promise to send him $30 from Washington he loaned me $20. We had a guarantee in Washington so we breathed easy there for two weeks and moved on to Philadelphia.

"After that came the one night stands for fourteen weeks. We returned to New York $21,000 in debt.

Not a single New York manager wanted our show, but after many days of persistent effort, "Shuffle Along" got into a little music hall on Sixty-third street. As Blake put it members of the cast got humpbacked from trying to avoid bumping their heads on the ceiling. But 'Shuffle Along' went over. For fourteen months it played to capacity audiences and then went to Boston for sixteen weeks.

Believe in Education.

Sssle and Blake are clean-cut serious minded men who feel that their production is doing much to offset race prejudice. Education they say, is the hope of the Negro.

Chicago was next for fifteen weeks and then it came to St. Louis.

"Negroes," said Sissle, "are naturally clannish, but they look to their white brethren, the big men of the superior race, for leadership. Never forget that a Negro would rather be a big man among Negroes than a little man among whites."

"Do you feel that you have been handicapped by your race?" they were asked.

"Yes and no," Sissle replied. "Our race has been an asset in the success of 'Shuffle Along,' but a handicap in our song writing. Publishers looked to us for jazz music and would accept such, but when we offered something more serious they would not take it.

"For example, we wrote 'Baby Bunting,' the song hit of 'Elsie,' seven years ago, but could not sell it. 'Two Hearts in Tune,' another song hit of 'Elsie,' also was written several years ago, as were 'My Vision Girl,' 'Mary Ann of Maryland,' and several others. But the publishers could not see them until after our success with 'Shuffle Along.'

"Now that we have arrived, so to speak, the handicap of race has been forgotten."

PHILA PA PUBLIC LEDGER
APRIL 6. 1923

Color War Begins in London Over Jazz Artists From U.S.

Critics Attempt to Arouse Prejudice Although Negroes Win Audience—Ask Cabinet to Bar Second American Troupe

Public Ledger Foreign Service

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London, April 5.—(By Wireless.)—The employment of a troupe of American Negro musical comedy artists as the star turn in a show marking the reopening of London's famous old music hall, the Empire, and the engagement by another manager of a second band of dusky entertainers for another revue soon to open here has resulted in several theatrical critics trumping up a color war, which today became so acute that tonight's opening of a cabaret, in which Negroes were to appear, has been indefinitely postponed.

The Dixieland entertainers already here made their debut this week in Sir Alfred Butts' appropriately named show, "The Rainbow." They paraded their wares to the jollification of the greater part of the audience, but to the disgust of certain critics, who next morning continued their disparagement of colored entertainers, which began weeks before the show opened.

The basis of most of their criticisms has been the unemployment prevalent throughout the English theatrical profession, which is made worse by invading aliens, but they also injected the consideration of color in their comments. The producers, however, maintain the box-office receipts demonstrate the Negroes can do things behind the footlights that native talent cannot successfully imitate. Sir Alfred Butts proposed to use his imported minstrels in a midnight cabaret. Now the more militant critics want the Minister of Labor to intervene in the role of liberator and emancipate all theatre land from further incursions of colored men by prohibiting the entry of the second troupe to the country.

"The Rainbow's" first night was enlivened by the low comedian of the piece being bundled off the stage by flunkeys when he insisted on telling the audience in a curtain speech that the Negroes had "queered my stuff." The next day his contract was cancelled.

Americans here are unable to understand the fuss raised over the Negroes, as they are outwardly indistinguishable from the Indians who are seen nightly in the company of fashionably gowned white women in the smartest hotels and restaurants. Black-face comedians long have been favorites in English music halls and as street entertainers, but the disgruntled critics do not like the real thing.

Theatrical—1923
Individual Troupes.

NEGRO THESPIAN IS REAL CYNIC

Dislikes Role of 'Emperor Jones'

Wants to Appear in Happier Play to Make Up for Present Vehicle

SAN FRANCISCO CAL CALL
JANUARY 15 1923

By GEORGE P. WEST

"CHARLES S. GILPIN, colored, Richmond, Virginia." The words, spoken in a whimsical, leisurely drawl, came from the open doorway of Ralph Pincus' private office at the Columbia Theater. It was Gilpin's mock announcement of his arrival to keep an appointment, and a moment later I was shaking hands with the negro actor whose work in "Emperor Jones" has put him in the spotlight as one of the half dozen most celebrated members of his race.

He had come from meeting his wife, just arrived from New York to join him here after the first separation in nine years. And he was happy, with the easy, chuckling, letdown, charming happiness of his race. They were to see California together for the first time, and he called it their second honeymoon.

He was still happy when we asked him about his son, a boy of 21, just now in Philadelphia.

"He hasn't ever sayd he wanted to go on the stage," Gilpin corrected. "But I suspect he does. He knows every character in Shakespeare. And he can sing and dance. And I'd rather have him go into business, where he'd have more security. He's a good listener. He listens to everything I have to say, and then goes and does ex-a-ctly a-s he plea-ses!"

Then the manager of the Columbia withdrew. We got down to the serious business of an interview. And I met the real Gilpin.

Face Hardens, Takes On Fighting Look

His strong, clear-cut face hardened. His fine brown eyes lost their whimsical, humorous gleam and became the alert, shrewd, snapping eyes of the fighter. For an hour, in every answer, in every gesture, I felt his distrust, his wary alertness, his tension in the presence of danger.

"Yes, I'm cynical! I've lived fifty years! Of course I'm cynical!

"I'm in this business to make a living. No art for art's sake for me!

"For thirty years I was paid according to my color. Now I'm paid according to my ability. No, I'm not, yet. But I aim to be."

Had he met this man or that? No.

"You see, until three years ago I never had a chance to meet anybody that knew what good acting was. My wife and I did a song and dance act, 14 minutes of solid laughs, and if the headliners wanted more time for encores we had to cut it!

"I've seen life from every angle. Everything, from entertainer in a bawdy house to playing an acolyte at the altar."

Those thirty years! No pretty illusions for Charles Gilpin! And then a success full of pitfalls for a man of his race. No spacious, secure world for him! A fight to the end.

Ever Surrounded by Unseen Dangers

Puzzled and baffled at first, gradually I understood. Like Emperor Jones when he is surrounded by enemies in the forest, in Eugene O'Neil's play, Gilpin himself feels about him "unseen dangers. One rash utterance on the race question, one misstep, and the enemy will rush in on him, the enemy in the guise of a crushing race prejudice, in the guise of a mob, in the guise of hooded figures. And with a cool mastery Gilpin watches every approach, foresees every peril. Unlike his stage character, he will never quit fighting; he glories in the peril, he understands it.

But Gilpin's peril is real, where the stage negro's is imaginary. Who hasn't feared the mob in these recent years? We have feared imaginary mobs never yet seen in America—bolshevik mobs, anti-this-and-that mobs, mobs of intolerant and violent men have threatened all of us in imagination. Who shall say that Gilpin, the negro, standing on his insecure pinnacle after those thirty years, should be mellow and trustful and spiritually disarmed?

Gilpin knows. He knows too well, and his knowing is a tragedy.

Fought Game Alone, Single Handed

There is another tragedy. It is the tragedy of a man who came into the world facing terrible obstacles, a negro in the old South, a physical weakling, a hopeless bedridden consumptive at 19, a man who fought his way alone and single handed, accepting every hazard and playing the game as he found it, the game of the wolf, the brave old game, made ten times fiercer by his race, the struggle of the individual against circumstances; a man who won it at last, and who when free at past 50 to breathe freely, to enjoy what's left of life with his family, found himself assailed from all sides by men and women who didn't help him, who know nothing of those thirty searing years, but who insist that his life and his success belong, not to himself, but to his race, to his race that didn't help him, his race that has given him nothing, his race that must fight its way up as he has fought his.

He was telling me the strange accident that gave him his great chance after thirty years. The Provincetown Players were a handful of radicals without funds, producing plays written by their friends, in the dingy parlor of a dingy old brick house on Macdougal street in the heart of Greenwich Village. Eugene O'Neil, now famous, was one of them. They needed a negro for his "Emperor Jones."

"I had closed in Drinkwater's 'Lincoln' and was playing in vaudeville down South," said Gilpin. "I'd never heard of the Provincetown Players. But a friend named Minnie Brown learned that they were looking for somebody, and she told them about me. The show was billed to open November 29. I didn't get the letter until November 22.

"My engagement was finished and I was going back to New York anyhow. The man who had taken the part didn't like it, and he was glad to turn it over to me. I arrived the night of the dress rehearsal. They offered me $50 a week. It didn't look very good to me. But the critics happened to see it. And a few weeks later, when the other authors who were waiting to have their plays produced got restless, we moved up on Broadway."

Don't Like Part; Never Liked It

"Did you like the part?"

"No! I didn't like it then, and I never have liked it!"

It shot out, defiantly. I don't think he intended to say it. A few minutes earlier he had been defending the play against the charge that it shows the negro in a bad light, as a victim of superstitious fears.

"And I'll tell you why I don't like it," he added quickly. "It's too much work! I don't like hard work any better than the next person!"

No one who has seen "Emperor Jones" will doubt that it is a tremendous nervous and muscular ordeal. Gilpin is "the whole thing" from start to finish. But is that a reason for disliking the play that has made him rich and famous? I wondered. I doubted. For three years a controversy has raged among the negroes and their white friends about "Emperor Jones" and Gilpin.

"They all want to write plays for me showing the negro in a favorable light," says Gilpin. "I don't want propaganda. I want a play that will make a universal appeal. I want to make people forget race. I want to take them up above all such divisions.

"All my life I've been a comedian. And I am looking for a happier play to follow this. I like to take people clear up high and then drop them, with a laugh. I like satire. I've got a good deal of the kid in me. And when the kid is gone out of a man the man himself hasn't much longer to live."

Resents Fact There's A Race Question

If Gilpin were not passionately loyal to his race the criticism would not bother him. I doubt if any newspaper interviewer ever gets from him a really frank expression of his feeling about the race question. His guard goes up instantly. It's an old, old danger, and he remembers those thirty years. He has plenty to say about it. One reason he hates to discuss it is his resentment that there should be a race question.

"This country is a melting pot," he said. "And you can't say that one man is any more or less of an American than another. Nobody can put a hyphen in front of my name. The negroes have been in this country for 300 years. It's the only country they know. And there are 12,000,000 of them.

"Social equality doesn't interest me. There isn't any social equality inside the white race or the colored race, so why should we talk of it between white men and colored men? What the negro wants is a chance to make a living. He wants a square deal economically. And he wants his civil rights, if he must pay taxes."

Among other things Gilpin has been a Pullman porter.

"Most of those young porters you see on the trains are earning money to put themselves through college," he said. "Some of them make enough in three months to pay for a whole term at Tuskegee or one of the other schools in the South. Some of them are putting themselves through Harvard."

"You don't believe in the negroes organizing and fighting, then?"

"Believe in their fighting? I certainly do. I believe in them fighting, but with their brains!"

Inner Self-Confidence Carries to Victory

Only an immense inner self-confidence could have taken Gilpin through to victory. And he has it.

"When we got out on the road with this show we changed it a lot," he said. "We made a real show of it. O'Neil had a lot of repetitions. I cut them out, and added a number of my own lines. It's a waste of time to repeat lines in the theater."

His early fight against tuberculosis was a triumph of will.

"I couldn't leave my bed," he said. "It was in Richmond, and I was 19. Then I took up a crude system of physical culture that a friend taught me. In a few weeks I could walk, and then I could leave the house and get as far as the corner without having to sit down and disgrace the gutter." He gave a vivid pantomime of the consumptive's terrible cough. "Now I believe that the doctor made a mistake; that I never did have tuberculosis. But I've been careful ever since. They say you can't contract it after 45. But there might be a germ left inside."

Instead of resting during the short intervals between the scenes of "Emperor Jones" Gilpin puts on gloves and boxes with some member of his company in order to keep the sweat running. It's not just a necessary exercise. He enjoys it. He tells you again that he has "a good deal of the kid" in him.

He leaves the theater with you to go to an obscure address, unknown even to his manager. He tells you that New Orleans is bidding for him and his show. A daily paper there is willing to buy the house for a week. Until recently it couldn't be booked in the old South, except in Richmond and Norfolk. That is a triumph.

"And now they'll have to pay for it if they want us," he says.

A fighter is Gilpin, a wary, shrewd, masterful fighter. His distrust, his cynicism, are the tragic scars left by those thirty unforgotten years.

GILPIN AS 'EMPEROR JONES'

"SHUFFLE ALONG" MAKES BIG HIT IN BIRMINGHAM

2-24-23

Perhaps the most complete and true story of the "Shuffle Along" musical comedy that appeared at the Jefferson Theatre last week, was expressed in The Birmingham News in its issue of February 15th. This story was prepared by a theatrical critic and gives the performers a most complimentary expression. The story makes the following expression:

In reviewing "Shuffle Along," the stupendous, all-colored, record-breaking musical comedy," which opened at the Jeffereson Wednesday night, one is at a loss how best to begin. In the first place, one is led to expect, or, that is, jumps to the conclusion, that here he will find a showful of Negro humor—typical, traditional and fictional, as the South knows it—but instead he runs into a smart, light stepping, wise cracking bunch of New York actors who, with clear enunciation and cream-like complexions, upset all expectations. Indeed, the absence of dialect is marked even in one of the principal comedians and this, together with the burnt-cork that is necessary in their make-up (to get over their more or less ministrelsy parts) and the general color scheme entirely sort of seems out of harmony in the Land of Cotton, or would seem so to a white audience.

However, it must be realized that the show is a straight musical comedy, and if you will visualize any musical comedy you have seen and put it in the hands of trained Negro actors you will get the whole setting.

As to the show, it is rattlingly good, altogether diverting and a piece of stage work regular theater-goers will enjoy—even if for no other reason than the contrast that it furnishes. John Vaughner, as Steve Jenkins, a long, tall Negro, who, fortunately, is made up as black as a lump of coal from Blue Creek, or Warrior, is a delight, and once you hear him proclaim himself a candidate for "mare", with a long "a," a "y" slightly accented and emphasis on the whole thing, you bear with him. Vaughner is typical and a clever comedian.

Working with Vaughner is a little Negro—Sam Peck, played by Edgar Conners—whose acquisition of a brogue tends to spoil his comedy part and imitation at dialect, but between Sam and Steve an interesting plot is worked out, centering around a three-cornered race for mayor of Jim Town and a lot of larceny in the grocery of Jenkins and Peck.

The comedians, however, are not the whole show, and in Theo. McDonald and Blanche Thompson, two good voices are found. Billy Dewey, with his dancing, and Al Baldwin and a number of others, with parts, also perform creditably. The chorus, by the way, is exceedingly well drilled, and while it doesn't venture forth on anything difficult, the execution of what it does do is noticeably well done. In fact, the whole show, which is rather long, is staged smoothly and swiftly, and when white patrons see it Friday and Saturday they are sure to find a good deal of genuine entertainment. The first night, which was for Negroes, drew a capacity house. Thursday's performances also were for Colored patrons.

Another Bert Williams In Owen Moore Picture

Screen and stage critics who have seen the work of Douglas Carter, the colored comedian recently signed by Selznick, believe he will fill the place of the late Bert Williams.

Carter, who is appearing with Owen Moore in "Love Is An Awful Thing," at the Lincoln theater Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, is a natural born actor. So natural, in fact, that he scored a distinct success in his first picture, "The Poor Simp," despite the fact that he had never before appeared either on the stage or before the camera. He is a resident of Los Angeles and when the Selznick producing forces returned to their West Coast studios, Myron Selznick immediately signed the colored comedian to appear with Owen Moore once more. This time in "Love Is An Awful Thing."

Theatrical – 1923
Individual Troupes

Notables, White and Negro, Mingle at Theatre Opening

N Y C WORLD
FEBRUARY 4, 1923

All-American Theatre Association Presents "Salome"—Both Races Sit Together in Boxes and Pit—First Production Well Staged and Successfully Acted.

(Special to The World.)

CHICAGO, Feb. 3.—Few things more significant have come to Chicago's art life in recent years than the opening of the Avenue Theatre, Indiana Avenue and 31st Street, under the direction of the All-American Theatre Association. It meant the blending of white and black in an audience of huge proportions. Literary Chicago turned out for the opening and touched elbows with the leaders of Chicago's Negro citizenry. An impressive number of the city's social, artistic and financial leaders were on hand to lend their influence. They shared boxes with men and women of a darker hue and sat with them in orchestra seats.

The movement for an art theatre wherein the actors should all be Negroes and where plays built upon racial characteristics should be presented has been brought to materialization. The bill included a one-act comedy and a tragedy. The comedy was "The Chip Woman's Fortune," a playlet, by Willis Richardson; the tragedy was Oscar Wilde's "Salome."

In addition to these dramatic works the Coleridge Taylor Orchestra of thirty-six pieces furnished excellent music, and an appeal for support was made by a member of the organization.

To consider the more important of the plays, "Salome" was given an interesting and artistic presentation. Meagerness of scenery is accounted of little importance these days. The lights were well managed and something in the lighting gave the dark skinned actors the semblance of whiteness. Salome's rounded limbs, half revealed under the draperies of her seven veils, glistened white.

Easily the star was Miss Evelyn Freer, who played Salome. Beautiful, graceful, endowed with a fine dramatic sense and well rehearsed, Miss Freer brought to mind, and that not without favorable comparison, Mary Garden's impassioned moments. She danced more reservedly than some other Salomes, and her fondling of the Prophet's head was not so gruesome.

The Herod of Sidney Kirkpatrick was another outstanding role. The interminably long speeches were a tax almost equal to some of Shakespeare's upon the memory, and the characterization of the wicked Tetrarch called for fine acting ability. A deep voiced speaker, Solomon Bruce, was Jokanau, whose one appearance was admirably managed. The other players acquitted themselves creditably.

Domestic Comedy.

In the curtain raiser, a comedy of Negro domestic troubles, the same players showed their versatility by keeping the audience in an uproar. Countless bouquets were passed over the footlights. The company is directed by Raymond O'Neil White, who has been associated with little theatre movements in this country and Europe. He comes here from Cleveland. The players have had much experience in Negro drama for Negroes.

Many members of Chicago's social world were present to wish luck to the venture. Among them were Graham Aldis, Arthur Aldis, Mrs. James H. Field, Allan B. Pond, Mrs. Cloyd Head, Prof. and Mrs. Ferdinand Schevill, Edgar Lee Masters, Mrs. Paul Willing, Mrs. John C. Willing, Mrs. Sherwood Anderson, Mrs. Harriet Taylor Treadwill, Miss Alice Vogt, Mrs. Leroy Goble, T. B. Hinckley, John Sloan, Miss Florence Holbrook and Miss Mary McDowell, Gene Markey, Harry Hanson, Miss Florence Kilman and Mrs. Arthur Wilcoxson.

ACTORS AT THE AVENUE DO A MOLIERE COMEDY

Chicago Daily News
2-13-23

Excellent Effort in an Ambitious Work; "The Train North" Is Given.

BY MOLLIE MORRIS.

"They'll be on Broadway soon" is being said of those clever folk at the Avenue theater who, under the direction of Raymond O'Neil, are putting on plays of which a New theater or a Theater Guild might be proud and in a way which no theater movement Chicago has fostered has surpassed.

Making their own scenery, designing their own costumes, they are accomplishing a great deal in the way of an uplift to art.

Not all of the players are amateurs. Laura Bowman and Sidney Kirkpatrick, for instance, are seasoned actors. They went abroad with the Williams and Walker company years ago and were "commanded" before the crowned heads of Europe. Some of the other players have had professional training and that gorgeous young beauty, Evelyn Preer, has been in pictures. Incidentally, it is said that one of her pictures, "Deceit," is soon to be released in Chicago.

Choice of a Classic.

With the exception of Donald Robertson's efforts to present Moliere's comedies and an occasional attempt of an amateur organiaztion or an art theater that classic playwright finds himself on the book shelf most of the time or serving as a ladder up which students climb into a familiarity with the French language. It remained for the All-American Theater association, the negro stock organization at the Avenue theater, to give us a revival of that lively comedy, "The Rogueries of Scapin," last evening as the secondw bill of the season. TAhey haveit billed as :"The Follies of Scapin." It was an admirable effort and it would be a pity to let these players suffer for lack of patronage when their performance is so entirely creditable.

To remind those who may have forgotten their Moliere "The Rogueries of Scapin" is what the name suggests—the amiable deviltry of a clever rogue whose efforts in the play are directed toward helping some and harassing others. His wit is as nimble as his legs and his mind fertile in invention. That his young master has fallen in love with a beautiful gypsy and married her without his father's consent and that his master's young friend has done likewise while their fathers plan different matches for them is the dilemma. How Scapin fools the old men, helps the youths and gets in bad himself only to find a way out is the comical situation. It is slapstick comedy, of course, of and for the time it was written, but it still makes rollicking fun. Frank Jaxson as the clever Scapin did well and when he becomes smoother in his lines, speaks more distinctly and is less nervous, as undoubtedly he will in a few more performances, he will be a "card." Sidney Kirkpatrick as Argante and Arthur Ray as Geronte, the baffled fathers in the case, are both good actors and were excellent in this. Monte Hawley and Lionel Mongas as the young blades, Octave and Leander, made a good impression and Solomon Bruce achieved a hit in the part of Silvester in the scene where he intimidates Argante. Evelyn Preer, of "Salome" fame, and Marion Harrison, appeared as the charming captors of the young men's hearts.

Folk Play Is Given.

"A Train North," announced as a racial play and written by F. H. Wilson, occupied the second place on the program. It was played by Laura Bowman as the mother, Sidney Kirkpatrick as the father, Arthur Ray as the son, Marion Harrison as the daughter and Lionel Monagas as the young man from the north in love with Celia. Just a bit of family life and the evil that befell a girl through a man and the vengeance which overtook him. Simplicity and sincerity marked the work of the players and special credit belongs to Miss Harrison for her acting of a difficult role. Laura Bowman in a mother part is the Mary Carr of her race.

Singing of the Quartet.

You will be repaid for a tripe to 31st street and Indiana avenue just to hear the singing of that joyous quartet called "The Virginians." In their dress suits they do make "some" appearance and their voices blend in harmony in the singing of "Good News," "Don't Let Nobody Turn You 'Round," "I'm the One in Need of Prayer" and other spiritual and Jordan songs. They take the place of a regular orchestra and are accompanied only by a piano. The quartet is composed of Charles Settles, Ernest E. Smith, J. Ernst Oldham and D. H. Hager, with Theo Taylor at the piano. They filled in the interlude between the Moliere comedy and the folk drama and almost made folks wish they had come for a concert instead of a play.

SHUFFLE ALONG PLEASES LARGE AUDIENCES

Savannah Tribune
2-28-23

Shuffle Along, a musical comedy, attracted large audience at the Savannah theatre last Thursday and Friday. The show which consisted of about twenty-five persons with Emma Jackson as leading lady, was entertaining and received hearty applause throuhout the performance. The costumes were far above those of any colored show which has been here in the past few years.

"SUNSHINE SAMMY" NOW FULL FLEDGED STAR.

Dallas Ethrege
Dallas Texas
3-17-23

(Pacific News Bureau).

Hollywood, Calif., March 16.—Earnest Frederick Morrison, the 10 year old film actor, known to millions the world over as "Sunshine Sammy;" has at last won the coveted goal of stardom.

Young Morrison with his baby sister Florence (Farina) head the cast of juvenile actors in the series of "Our Gang" comedies made at the Hal Roach studios in Culver City and release to the leading theatres throughout the world by Pathe.

Born in 1913 Earnest has played in more pictures than any juvenile actor in the films. From co-starring with Baby Marie Osburne in two and five reel dramas, Earnest has supported in almost weekly releases "Snub Pollard" and Harold Lloyd. His success with these comedians won him the starring position of "Our Gang" comedies; and incidentally o substantial raise in weekly salary, which is said to run into three figures; the highest salary any Negro film actor.

JUVENILE NEGRO ACTOR NOW FULL-FLEDGED STAR

Norfolk Journal
3/17/23

(Pacific News Bureau)

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'SALOME' IN LOOP TO-MORROW

Chicago Daily News
3/7/23

Negro Folk Players to Present Benefit Matinee Performance.

"Salome" will come into the loop for a single performance to-morrow afternoon and will be at the Olympic theater for a benefit matinee.

The play by Oscar Wilde will be presented by the Negro folk players, who for the last few weeks have been acting at a south side theater. This company has attracted wide attention by the unique version of a number of plays which the cast has put on under the direction of Raymond O'Neil. Miss Evelyn Preer will take the title role in "Salome" and the rest of the cast is made up of Negro professionals. Miss Laura Bowman as Herodias and Sidney Kirkpatrick as the tetrarch have won praise for their acting.

As a curtain raiser, a short Negro folk play will be given, called "The Chip Woman's Fortune." The proceeds of this performance will be used to give further opportunity for dramatic expression to talented members of the colored race. The company has been engaged by an eastern producer to play in New York, Philadelphia, Washington and other east-

ern cities. The cast will leave soon for the east.

Tickets for to-morrow's matinee performance are on sale at the Olympic box office, Clark and Randolph streets. Many of the stage stars of the city have taken boxes and blocks of seats, among them Frank Keenan, Effie Shannon, William Hodge, Eddie Cantor, Ann Cuyl and members of their companies. The Drama league will also send a group of representatives.

AMERICAN RACE PREJUDICE PROPAGANDA SPREADS TO ENGLAND—MOST DISGRACEFUL ARTICLES APPEAR IN LONDON GRAPHIC

(Identical Reproduction)

NIGGER PROBLEM BROUGHT TO LONDON

OVER 2,000 VARIETY ARTISTES UNEMPLOYED ALREADY

The Hotel Gatter.

By Hannen Swaffer

Daily Graphic, London, England, March 6, 1923.

The all-black cabaret which, staged at the Empire, is to be the great attraction of the Darker London season, will be as black as night.

Indeed, Robert Law, the scenic artist, who is to paint a plantation scene so that niggers can act in front of it, said yesterday that they are even bringing over a black cook! So "Aunt Jemima," of Virginia, the Coal-Black Mammy of all time, will make waffles which, he said, "You could eat for ever, and still want more."

3/25/23

I suppose Black and White whisky and black coffee will also be sold at the cabaret—that is, of course, if the black cabaret is ever opened.

New York.

I print this proviso because Lord Decies, a prominent member of the London County Council, said yesterday, "When I saw the news that negroes were to act in the cabaret, I thought there must be some mistake. I do not think the L. C. C. will grant the license for a minute."

The license comes up for consideration this afternoon. But, since Sir Percy Simmons, the chairman of the Theatre and Music-Hall Committee, says that, when the license was recommended, he had no idea that black artistes were to be employed, there is no doubt that the matter will be "referred back."

Protest to the L. C. C.

Protests against black cabarets were heard in all sorts of places in London yesterday. Naturally, the strongest came from Albert Voyce and Monte Bayly, the chairman and organizer of the Variety Artistes' Federation, who were so indignant that they immediately sent the Clerk of the London County Conucil a protest against the license for a cabaret being granted if negro artistes were to be imported to act in it. A copy of this letter was sent, also, to scores of L. C. C. members.

"We think it would be a disgrace to both theatrical and music-hall performers if permission were granted to exploit imported black men and women in this way," they said, "while hundreds of talented British artistes are on the verge of want through lack of engagements."

"Over 2,000 variety artistes are unemployed in England," said Mr. Voyce, "and the stories I hear every day of want are heartrending. When employed, these artistes earn anything from £10 to £100 a week; but, so bad is the shortage of money in England, that no fewer than 250 of the smaller music-halls which used to employ from four variety acts are now saving money by showing second-class pictures instead.

"We have no objection to American artistes coming to England. In fact, ninety per cent of those who come here join our federation and are welcome. There are also in England negro turns, most respectable and most decent, who behave themselves and keep their place. But we view with the greatest apprehension a cabaret where black artistes would actually mix with the white folk the tables.

There are enough here now without bringing over any more foreign turns, which will make our labor market even worse than it is."

I did not speak to many managers about the nigger problem, because most of them are very cautious when entertainment policy is discussed. But J. A. E. Malone, of Grossmith and Malone, who is an outspoken Australian, said he was offered the all-black revue, "Shuffle Along," eighteen months ago. But he would never dream of bringing black artistes over to England. "I am surprised anybody has thought of it," he said.

Film producers won't have negroes in principal parts. In "One Exciting Night," the new Griffith film to be produced at the New Oxford Theatre on Thursday, there is a negro part. So Griffith cast Porter Strong, a white man, for it and make him black his face. Negroes do appear in films, but only as waiters or in very minor parts.

White actors would not act with them for one reason, and, for another, there are no negro film actors of ability. They haven't enough intelligence. No white woman film actress would act in a scene where a negro had to touch her, or make love to her, and, if she did, the film would be too revolting to show.

Even the black in "The Loves of Pharaoh," the German show, are really white.

"You are right and I'm with you in your attack on nigger revues," said a big film man. "I hope that any man who tries to foist black revues on the British public, while white artistes are on the verge of starvation, will lose his money. He is lowering the standard of entertainment."

2,000 Musicians Idle

"There are something like two thousand of our union out of work," said an official of the Musicians' Union. Many of them are unemployed because of the introduction of American negro bands, now in favor with certain dance clubs. British musicians could play quite as well."

"The negroes produced one good actor, Bert Williams. But he's dead now," said an American staying at the Savoy Hotel. "He was liked because he knew his place and did not make himself aggressive. I like negroes—as servants and as workers—but not as actors. Why have negro actors when so many white people can act so much better?"

The Great Negro Star

The reason for this is that "The Plantation," originally, was staged in a restaurant run by Sam Salvin in New York, where there have been three negro revues recently, the first "Shuffle Along," being such a success that it was imitated, and the result being that there were all sorts of black and white troubles in the negro quarters of New York.

Butt, however, turned down Salvin's show, because, he tells me, he was asked £1,300 a week, which he thought too much. So he brought over Robert Law, an American artist, to design a plantation setting, and hired another company of colored artistes, which, he says, are better than the Salvin company. It is the Salvin company, apparently, which Cochran is bringing to London, because Florence Mills, whom he announces as his star, was the star in the original Salvin show, "The Plantation," in New York.

Sir Afred naively objects to the word "black" revue. He says "colored" is better. I do not know whether he means pink or green; but, anyway, he is bringing over negroes, who are invariably colored the ordinary black way.

London's ordinary white actors and actresses are naturally gravely concerned about the question of unemployment which will be accentuated by the wholesale importation of negro artistes into a country where they do not belong.

"Salvin asked high terms for Mills and his original 'Plantation' revue, but nothing like the £1,300 Butt mentions, this probably because my standing in the United States is higher than Butt's, as Salvin told me. He never suggested to me mixing up the negroes with the whites. In fact, he agreed that would be impossible.

"I was offered several negro shows described by agents as equal to Salvin's 'Plantation' revue. A. Duse, an Edith Evans and a Nelly Faren are not duplicated, and I saw only one Florence Mills. I shall be proud to present her in London. She is unique."

Will Vodery Says "Class Will Tell"

After reading the above article in the Daily Graphic by Hannen Swaffer, it is quite evident that he has come in contact with a very inferior, ill-bred, prejudiced American, whose traits he has absorbed. His very clumsy use of the word "nigger" shows that he has been susceptible to this Southern propaganda of America. The propaganda is directly the outburst of a business controversy between Charles B. Cochran and Sir Alfred Butts. Cochran, who is the Ziegfield of Great Britain succeeded in completing a contract with Salvin, who originated, owns and controls the "Plantation Review," for the revue to be produced in London. Regardless of what is being said or has been said in London concerning the "Plantation Review," it is a positive fact that the Review will open no later than May 15th at the London Pavillion, for not less than 12 weeks. Already it has been heralded all over London, Paris, Italy and other foreign cities and they are looking forward to this world-famed Race Production, due to the commendable comment and high esteemed Americans who have advertised them so famously abroad.

Theatrical — 1923.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

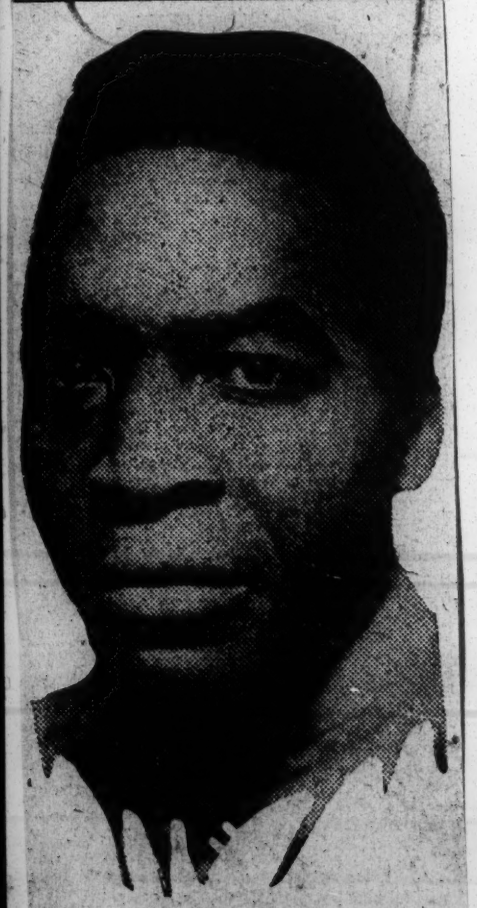
N. Y. C. CIT'S
MAY 1, 1923

Negroes as Actors

Those whose acquaintance with our own American negro extends beyond the skin, will not be surprised to mark his collective appearance on Broadway this week in a production worthy of the loftiest efforts of a serious art group, for the negro is a "born actor" in every sense of that much misused epithet.

Looking back in retrospect over the results of the recent negro connection with the dramatic and musical theatre, one is led to the rather astonishing reflection that such an actor as John Gilpin, and such productions as "Strut Miss Lizzie," "Shuffle Along," "The Plantation Revue," and others have left an undeniable stamp on the American theatre. The negro is a potent force for originality in America. Taken properly in hand he can be made to utter the seemingly real American idiom, even as he now appears to be voicing it in increasingly intelligible jazz.

Algerian Star Thrills Paris in Gilpin Role



M. BENGLIA

M. Benglia, the remarkable Algerian actor, who scored a personal triumph in Paris, France, in the

1923

presentation of "Emperor Jones," that vivid drama which was the outstanding success of the American theatrical season last year. Charles Gilpin, the Race's greatest actor, was featured in the production in America. The drama was presented in Paris for the first time at the National Theater Oct. 31 under the patronage of the ministers of foreign affairs and public instruction. M Benglia played the title role.

FLORENCE MILLS CAUSES STRIKE IN "FOLLIES"

Courier News Service

NEW YORK CITY, Nov. 10 — The engagement of Florence Mills as a special attraction and addition to the 'Greenwich Village Follies' at the Winter Garden, New York, nearly precipitated a walk-out among the cast of that show, led by Daphne Pollard. The Colored singer was featured alone in advertisements in the dailies mentioning her appearance in the show Monday of this week.

St. Louis, Mo.

Later the show's management had to take advertising space in the same papers listing all principals with the production to pacify the bunch. That didn't altogether act as a pacifier, it's said. 11-16-23

Miss Mills is reported receiving $1,000 weekly with the 'Follies.'

Romeo Daugherty, writing in 'The Amsterdam News,' tells the story:

The hydra-headed monster of race prejudice, together with that other reptile known as professional jealousy, reared their heads down on Broadway last week because little Florence Mills moved a step higher and joined the Greenwich Village Follies and was given the kind of advertising that always accompanies a star of her magnitude.

St. Louis, Mo.

To 'Variety' we are indebted for the information which lets us into a state of affairs not suspected by the throng who last week applauded Florence Mills to the echo after she had strutted her stuff at the Winter Garden with as much success if not more than one Daphne Pollard, who felt hurt that the Colored girl should be made so much of.

Miss Pollard and her supporters, like those who tried to get bad when Bert Williams first became a member of the Ziegfield Follies, felt their popularity waning when Florence hit the stage Monday night, October 15, and resorted to the old cracker trick of trying to embarrass the little lady who has carried her honors with so much modesty.

Of course, we are hoping that the management of the Greenwich Village Follies will be brave enough to emulate the example of Florenz Ziegfield and give those who are not satisfied to be with Miss Mills in the show a chance to withdraw, as there are so many others, who can take their places at short notice.

FOLLIES OF PARIS TOO MUCH FOR U. S., BELIEF

The Commercial Appeal 9-26-23

Revue in Nude Would Lose Atmosphere in America.

(Copyright Cable to the New York Herald and The Commercial Appeal.)

PARIS, Aug. 25.—The greatest doubt is felt here that Paris' "Folies Bergere" company, together with some of the sketches shown in that most Parisian of music halls, ever will find their way to America. No confirmation is forthcoming of reported negotiations between an American impresario and the management of the theater, which has gained considerably in popularity since the end of the war, thanks to the patronage of American visitors. But it would appear almost certain that, first, only a very large sum of dollars could lure the Folies to America, and second, that its revue, as presented here, would have to be cut before they could be produced in New York.

Whereas the tunes and comedy in these revues quickly become popular in Paris, the shows themselves are far from the kind to which parents may take their children for an evening's enjoyment. Not only have the Folies Bergere the reputation of being an establishment where the scantiest costumes are displayed, but they mean to live up to that reputation, continually announcing the presentation of "the prettiest women in France, in night attire."

Again, the atmosphere of the halls of which this is typical probably does not exist anywhere else in the world. Extensively patronized by society folk, the Folies Bergere also is a haunt of the demi-mondes, who parade around the promonoir. Here men and women who never otherwise would meet strike up an acquaintance that lasts only a few hours.

It seems difficult to believe that revues such as shown in Paris ever would be tolerated in New York or elsewhere in the United States. Quite apart from the bevy of nude women who appear nightly in the Folies there are scenes which, though they have a sentimental appeal to the French people, certainly would cause an uproar in America. Many of the thousands of visiting Americans too have complained of parts in which negro artists work with white.

Then, again, how could some of the songs heard at the Folies be reproduced in America? As rendered here the lyrics generally have two meanings, but transmuted into English, or even American, the double entendre might not be as subtle. Also the dances shown here are not always in such good form as those to be seen in America.

As a matter of fact, about the only thing which might pass muster in America is the music, and that often is no more than a composition of popular American and French airs.

"PLANTATION DAYS" BACK FROM ABROAD

ard Harper Tells How olored Musical Show Was Received In London

STAYED SIX WEEKS

Coming of Florence Mills and Her Show Cut Stay Short

New York, June 1[illegible]—Leonard Harper of the team of Harper and Blanks, the principals in the unfortunate "Plantation Days" Company that O'Neil and Greenwald took to London under contract to Sir Alfred Butt of the Empire Theater to appear in that house in the "Rainbow" the show that De Courville produced and in which Jimmie Hussey was to have starred, called at the New York office of the Billboard, and told the following story of their trip:

The Cochran interests had already contracted the "Plantation Room Revue" with Florence Mills when we were sent to England, said Harper. Seeing the competitive possibilities of our company it seems that these interests began a newspaper campaign against us before we had arrived.

In this it was easy to enlist the sympathies of the British performers and musicians, with the result that there was a great deal of agitation. The public however was not at all unfriendly when we opened, and we worked the six weeks for which we were contracted. The four weeks' renewal however was not forthcoming because the restaurant in which the bulk of our work was to have taken place was never permitted to open.

Some fire restrictions were invoked to accomplish this. The whole matter being a local fight between conflicting interests, in which we were the sufferers, the not directly concerned. This confined our activities to a brief period in the production which was really not enough to justify the expense of retaining us. Hence our return.

We did not return steerage, as has been reported in a trade journal (not the Billboard). It is true that Sir Alfred Butt did not provide money for more than that, but the people of the company paid the difference between that and the second class rate.

We have no complaint against Mr. O'Neil, who was entirely fair, even though he neglected to specify in his contract any particular form of transportation. Our only complaint against the Empire management is their disinclination to permit our working the whole act in the show and thus provide us with a means to make ourselves worth more to them. The London public was entirely satisfactory. The management with no knowledge of our type of performance undertook to direct the material and time we were to have. This we believe to have been a tactical blunder, since we knew better how American Negro talent is presented better than could the English directors who were totally unfamiliar with the subject.

The unfavorable propaganda against the company got on the nerves of the performers, many of whom were new people with little travel experience, a fact that prevented our acceptance of one of the several offers for European engagements.

The company is back, the incident closed and I will at once assemble the people in preparation of a new show that will include most of the loyal performers. Nothing has been lost to the colored artist by our experience. There is no real ill-will for the colored artist in Europe, and I hope some day toz head another big show for a trip across the pond.

Dramatic Actor Pittsburgh With White Show

Courier Pittsburgh Pa.

Barrington Carter Signs to Play Important Part in Drama "Magnolia."

7-28-23

Barrington Carter has signed to play the part of "Rumbo" in "Magnolia," a drama being produced by Alfred Aarons, featuring Leo Carillo. The story is by Booth Tarking-

...and the A. L. Erlanger has scheduled the show to open at the Liberty theater in August.

Several of the big producers have been negotiating with Negro artists to depict race characters in the higher class plays. This is a policy for which the Billboard has long been fighting, as it gives to the part a more natural presentation, thereby improving the play, and provides employment for colored character actors.

White Actress Pulled a "Dinah From Dixie" Instead of Butterfly Dance

The Amsterdam News. 8-15-23
New York, N.Y.

And Now the Monocle-Wearing Leeches and Others Have Taken the Hint Not to Impose on the Generosity of the Stage Folks.

In the scandal sheet of the New York Sunday American, which parades under the more respectable title of the Magazine Page, an illuminating account comes to town telling how Irene Castle, who used to dance for the colored people through the supplication of the late Jim Europe when the dance craze was at its height in this country with the help of Florence Mills, administered a rebuke to the nobility of Great Britain.

It would seem that the lords, dukes and their ladies had a habit of inviting the shining lights of the stage to their parties and having the working performers "do their stuff" without any compensation other than the opportunity to meet the monocle-wearers and the hoi polloi in general. For a long time the American stage celebrities have argued among themselves about discontinuing the state of affairs, and while much was said against the practice, none had the nerve to offend the noble sons and daughters of the "Tight Little Isle."

It is said that Lady Cunard, a real leader of society across the pond, planned a party with the idea of inducing Irene Castle to be the big feature of the night and said nothing of a monetary reward for her efforts. It was the same old stuff of "inviting" Miss Castle to be a member of the party, but Irene knew that it was only because she was expected to do in private the dance for which, it is said, she is drawing down $1,000 a night to do in public.

Irene got sore and could not see her way clear to coming to the way of thinking of Lady Cunard and her friends and while accepting the invitation she planned la diplomatic rebuke, and, so 'tis said, asked Florence Mills, of the "Plantation Review," to help her. Irene is putting on what is called the "Butterfly Dance" in London and the English people went wild over it. Lady Cunard not only expected that Irene would put on the dance, but went so far as to arrange spotlights, etc., to add a darmatic touch to it upon the appearance of Miss Castle in her diaphanous habiliments.

Consulting with Florence, so it is said, Irene quickly acquired the art of blackface make-up, and borrowing some "down home" clothes of the colored star, chuckled exultantly at the thoughts of the discomfiture, embarrassment, etc., that would be the result. Assembling in the "great hall" of the Cunard mansion, the guests focussed their eyes expectantly on the door from which Irene was to appear, and the gentlemen of the party adjusting their monocles to the right angle to give the "see more" dress, supposed to be worn by Miss Castle a "close up," thought everything would be topping, doncherknow.

But lo and behold! As the spotlight sputtered and Miss Castle came into its rays you could have knocked them all over with a straw, for instead of the beautiful butterfly they saw a real old-fashioned "mammy" doing a clog dance, and so much out of their expectations, there was the silence of the grave instead of the uproarious applause which they had stored up for the entrance of the beautiful butterfly. We have not as yet heard what Lady Cunard said and did after recovering from the shock, but it is dollars to doughnuts few American stars will be asked to entertain the nobility free of charge in the future. Of course, if the story is given a great deal of airing on the other side, they might attempt to draw the color line a little harder but Florence should worry for the part she played in the affair.

Canadian Citizen Tells Of Impression 'Shuffle Along' Made in Dominion

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

When Joe Simms Sang "If You've Never Been Vamped by a Brownskin," the Show Was Voted a Success—Sissle, Blake and Chorus Praised.

Robert P. Edwards, the Canadian representative of the Associated Negro Press, sent a description of the reception accorded to the original "Shuffle Along" company by the Canadians, when the company played the city during the week of the Great Toronto Fair. His story, which went to over a hundred newspapers is, in part, as follows:

When Joe Simms sang, "If You've Never Been Vamped by a Brown-Skin, You've Never Been Vamped at All," on the first night when "Shuffle Along," starring Sissle and Blake, opened at the Royal Alexandria, Canada's premier theatre, recently, he sung a parable. For the 60 odd brown-skinned flexible voiced singers and versatile dancers, in gorgeous costumes, set in the most lavish and original scenery that ever graced a Canadian stage so completely vamped the exacting patrons of this famous playhouse that hundreds were turned away nightly, and various movements were inaugurated to persuade the management to lengthen their stay. As it was, the usually reserved patrons were so enthusiastic that they ignored all the time limits to curtain calls, and held the show until 11:30 nightly.

Needless to say, that the swelled chests (and heads, too), glaring eyes and smiling faces of the sons and daughters of Ham bespoke their pride in the performers, whose skin and hair was like ours. And the Elites (as Bert Williams used to say) hurriedly wended their way to the Royal Alex., to make inroads on the box office to get second and third glimpses of these annihilators of the Ku Klux.

7-21-23

Eubie Blake was recognized early and despite his coolness and calmness the audience became hilarious, as wielding his baton with one hand and tickling the ivories with the other, he brought forth such music—well such music—and from SOME ORCHESTRA. Noble Sissle, who tried to hide behind a minor part, was compelled to come out, and he came, giving a few local stunts, closing with a recitation on "The Boys on the Trenches" and the audience went wild.

Elections is where Canadians shine, and the show struck home at once, as the humorous campaign between Jenkins and Peck (alias Payton & Sims) partner in the Jimtown Grocery Store, was carried on before their eyes, from Jim Williams' Hotel to Possum Lane, Calico corners, and Spencer's Lane to the Mayor's Office.

Everybody who comes on in this big Dixie hit, as Toronto journalism describes it, is unsparing in his or her efforts to add something to the sum total of vigor in the piece. The girls responded to numerous curtain calls, but they couldn't appease the Canuck's desire for more. Miss Spencer and Mr. Browning sought to soothe the audience with "Love Will Find a Way," which was remarkably rendered, but in "Bandanna Days" the willy Canuck was carried away by the jazziest offering that ever crossed the Lakes.

The Syncopated Stenos are the most Jazziest of Typists, and many a staid Canadian businessman expressed a desire to swipe them. Extra speed was added to the show by the lightning-footed Traffic Cop of Jimtown.

When the curtain fell for the last time, it lef the exacting Toronto society folk asking for more. Said the Africanadian, 'If you've never been vamped by brownskins'—You needn't finish, replied the Caucanadian, "I have and am."—Robert P. Edwards.

RISE OF FLORENCE MILLS.

As leading comedian of Ziegfeld Follies, the name of Bert Williams was advertised in large type, and as star of "Emperor Jones" the name of Charles S. Gilpin is given due prominence. And now a female member of the race is being so signally honored in a white production in the person of Miss Florence Mills, the talented singing comedienne featured with the Greenwich Village Follies at the Wintergarden. In the newspaper advertisements telling of who's who, two names are prominently displayed over all others. That of Florence Mills is one of them.

10-27-23

Miss Mills is as most modest as she is gifted. Her rapid rise from a member of a vaudeville act to an international favorite has not turned her head. She is more concerned over her work before the footlights than any silly appeal to "go big" off the stage and gain a lot of cheap notoriety. There is little likelihood of Miss Mills becoming sadly afflicted with the "swelled head" as the result of the latest distinction that has come to her-an honor no other Negro woman has enjoyed.

PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN
MAY 22, 1923

Dunbar—Ethiopian Art Theatre

Raymond O'Neil's group of negro players of the Ethiopian Art Theatre played Oscar Wilde's "Salome" at the Dunbar last night. It was a curious kind of art, although color is no bar to impersonating an oriental.

The Salome of Evelyn Preer was entirely adequate. Her scene with the head of the prophet was well done without excessive realism. The famous dance was gone through to the accompaniment of a tambourine.

The Herod of Sydney Kirkpatrick was an altogether satisfying piece of acting, the best of his performance coming with his final entreating of Salome. Others giving praiseworthy performances were Laura Bowman, as Herodias, and Arthur Ray, as the young Syrian.

As a curtain raiser to "Salome," was given a short playet "The Chip Woman's Fortune", which tells the story of Silas, a colored man who has been "furloughed" from his job for two day for not keeping up payments on his talking machine, which is to be taken away by a dealer. "The Chip Woman" has earned her right to live in the house by collecting fuel from streets and alleys. Silas discovers that she has a hoard and asks her for a loan. The money, however, is for a son she expects home from jail. While they are heatedly arguing over the money the "Chip Woman's" son arrives. He has money of his own and lends Silas what he needs to stave off the talking machine collector, and the sketch ends with all hands bursting into a rag-time dance. Not much to tell about, but a character sketch truly and sympathetically done.

Theatrical — 1923
Individual Troupes, etc.,

Nashville Globe
March 31, 1923

LAFAYETTE PLAYERS AT BIJOU

For years it has been the custom to speak of the Negro as happy-go-lucky and free from all serious thought, or at least he was so painted upon the stage. But the Lafayette Players have truly dispelled that dis-illusion. Organized seven years ago, this wonderful aggregation of Negroes talented to the degree of geniusy, have met with enthusiastic receptions upon every appearance, Critics of every city, visited by this remarkable group of artists have been unanimous with the statement that the Lafayette Players are histronically the equal of any actors, regardless of color or creed. Shakespeare, Moliere, Dumas, Gounod, Clyde Fitch, Eugene Walters the world's greatest dramatists with and George Cohan are only a few of which the Lafayette Players are entirely familiar. 4-6-23

At a tremendous expense the management of the Bijou Theatre has prevailed upon the Lafayette Players to give Nashville the opportunity of viewing this super array of dramatic talent. The first offering "What Every Girl Should Know," a play that every mother and father should have seen so that they might be in a better position to inform their daughter of the pitfalls in life to be avoided.

Imagine a young girl, innocent of worldly wrongs and unschooled to unscrupulous men and their methods and designs, thrust out into the world to make a way for herself. Wrongly imprisoned for a crime she never committed, branded forever after as being a "jail bird," hounded by the police and told to keep moving, she meets the "right" man. Should she tell him of her past and take the chance of him misunderstanding? To do that possibly meant to lose him forever. She did not tell and as the old quotation runs, "Your past will find you out," so it was with this wronged unfortunate. What occurred when she came face to face with her past, is the story revealed in "What Every Girl Should Know." Miss Cleo Desmond, the bronze Sarah Bernhardt, has the difficult and complex role of the girl, and Nashville was assured that her interpretation of this character has indeliably stamped her as an Artist, extraordinary. Mr. Andrew Bishop, as the husband leaves nothing to be desired. This dashing, smashing, Lothario has a keen dramatic sense of conception and interpretation that reaches the hearts of all. The rest of the cast, Miss Isabelle Jackson, Messrs J. Lawrence Criner, Edward Thompson, A. B. DeComathiere, Walter Robinson, and W. "Babe" townsend offer substantial support to the feature players.

For the last half of the week, the greatest play of its kind ever written, and one which the whole world is familiar with, "Over the Hill to the Poor House," based on Will Carleton's poem of the same name and played on both screen and stage with much success. A mother will make any sacrifice, no matter how great, for her child, and even tho that child repays her sacrifice with ingratitude, neglect, and immeasurable selfishness, Mother always forgives and takes that child to her breast, forgetting all else but the fact that, "He is my boy." Mothers! Mothers! How wonderful and big you are! Would that every person in Nashville avail themselves of the opportunity to have seen "Over the Hill to the Poor House," because we are sure that when Mother has become tired in spirit, weak in strength and aged in body, love her with the same tolerant and undying devotion that she has always radiated upon us. Miss Cleo Desmond as the Mother, reaches heights of realism and emotionalism seldom approached by anyone except they be a Bernhardt or a Duse. She is one of America's greatest artists.

The people of Nashville are so well pleased with the splendid showing of these wonderful players that they have promised to stay over another week. The first half "Bought and Paid for," will be featured and the last half "The Spider." To see these will be of great benefit and to miss them you will miss a rare treat.

Don't forget the date, week of April 9th.

J. LAWRENCE CRINER—With Lafayette Players.

EDWARD THOMPSON—With Lafayette Players.

NEGRO IN DRAMA.

Chicago Defender
March 31, 1923

"The Drama" for March has the following criticism of Salome as presented in Chicago by Negro players. Mr. Kirkpatrick and his wife, known as Miss Laura Bowman, are Hoosiers of whom the Freeman is proud:

"The performance of Oscar Wilde's Salome, in English, is in itself a notable occurrence. It became doubly so when the All-American Theatre Association, a group of professional and amateur Negroes, made the presentation last month in an outside the Loop theatre. Of the performance on this particular occasion, I can say that I have rarely seen poetic drama given with so much understanding, appreciation, and beauty as these players gave to Salome. The title role was played by Miss Evelyn Preer a young woman of musical voice, grave of body, and a knowledge of the way in which dramatic verse should be read. The Herodias of Miss Laura Bowman was likewise a notable piece of acting as was the work of Sidney Kirkpatrick in the long and difficult role of Herod, the tetrarch. The Young Syrian of Arthur Ray and the Jokanaan of Solomon Bruce were both finely played."

Success of 'Shuffle Along' Due to Genius of Four Negroes and Business Acumen of White Man

ST LOUIS MO STAR
MARCH 27, 1923

Remarkable Negro Show Had Proverbial Bad Beginning—Sissle and Blake Wrote Music, Which Sets New Popular Standard.

The remarkable success of the all-negro musical comedy, "Shuffle Along," now in its second week at the American Theater, has focused attention upon the four stars, Miller and Lyles and Sissle and Blake, and particularly upon the latter who wrote the music and lyrics. These four negroes, aided by Al Mayer, a white man, developed "Shuffle Along" from a troup playing one night stands and going hungry doing it to a production which has taken in gross receipts of $1,500,000 in two years.

Don't get the idea that "Shuffle Along" was started on a shoe string, for, as the five men put it, "we didn't even have a shoe string." It was started on nothing, rehearsed on empty stomachs, taken on the road on promises, carried along on worthless checks and finally returned to New York with a deficit of $21,000.

The dramatic story of the success of "Shuffle Along" is also the narrative of the up-hill struggle of two young negroes, Noble Sissle, who wrote the lyrics for the production and Eubie Blake, who wrote the music. In addition to writing the show, they have composed more than a score of popular songs. Blake is the "iron man" of the team and not only directs the orchestra, but plays the piano while doing so through the entire production. At one point he goes to the stage for a piano concert.

Sissle is 33 years old and was born in Indianapolis. He finished grade school and high school and studied two years at Depau University. During summer vacations he trouped out with quartets and jubilee singers and got his early training at composing lyrics by writing parodies for football yells and songs.

Blake is 38 years old and can't remember when he could not play the the piano. He was born in Baltimore and when a child could play by ear almost anything he heard someone else play. He graduated from the grade schools and then drove a doctor's carriage for $1.50 a week.

Played in Dance Hall.

"I got tired of driving that old carriage and got a job playing the piano in a negro dance hall," Blake said. "I couldn't read a note of music until after I was 25 years old. I married a competent musician and she taught me higher music."

Sissle and Blake met in the summer of 1915 in Baltimore. It was there they wrote their first song, "It's All Your Fault." They got $25 for it, which was split, fifty-fifty.

"After the summer season," began Sissle, taking up the narrative, "we were engaged in a dance hall where we met headliners and wrote songs for them. None of the songs was accepted.

"Blake had a local reputation and he stayed in Baltimore, conducting orchestras. I moved to Palm Beach as an entertainer. Some New York people who thought I was good told Jim Europe, the orchestra leader, about me and he gave me a job. I went to New York. Europe knew all about Blake and had been trying to get him, and we persuaded him to come to New York in the fall of 1916. At that time Europe was organizing his big band for Col. Hayward's Fifteenth Regiment of National Guard. I got into it. And then came the war and it caught me in the band. I went over with Hayward's 'Hell Fighters' and soon got out of the band and into the intelligence service. I came out with a shave tail's commission.

"Blake, in the meantime, had stayed in New York and was looking out for Europe's interests——"

"Jim Europe's interest," interjected Blake. "Sissle here was looking out for the interests of Europe proper."

"Well, we got back in February, 1919," Sissle continued, "and Europe's band went on the tour which ended in Europe's death in Boston when a drummer stabbed him. Immediately after Blake and I teamed up again and spent eighteen months on the Keith circuit.

Met Miller and Lyle.

"In January, 1921, we participated in a benefit at a negro theater in Philadelphia. Miller and Lyle were on the same bill. Then and there 'Shuffle Along' was born. Blake and I had always wanted to take out a show, but needed a book. Miller and Lyle had taken out several, but had little success because they lacked original music. We decided

to team up on book and music.

"A short time later we were in New York looking for a cheap show that had failed. We intended to revamp it, use the lines prepared by Miller and Lyle, the music arranged by Blake and myself, stage it at a negro theater and then call in the white managers to look it over. Miller and Lyle, who had a lot of experience picking up cheap shows, were looking for one when they met Al Mayer. And at this point enter our friend and benefactor."

Mayer took up the story:

"I had always believed there was room for a good negro show, but I had never found the show. I had taken out seven negro productions and all were flops. But I saw the possibilities as outlined by Miller and Lyle and Sissle and Blake, and got busy.

"We five agreed to go into partnership. Miller and Lyle were to arrange the lines, Blake and Sissle were to prepare the music and I was to handle the business end.

"Right here let me say this for these four boys: There has never been a piece of paper between us; we have nothing but the pledged word of each other but that verbal contract is as good as gold. The profits are split five ways.

"To get back to my story. I knew that John Cort had the scenery and wardrobe of Eddie Leonard's show, 'Roly Boly Eyes.' I invited him to lunch. He accepted. I told him I would be back in thirty minutes and I went out and hocked my overcoat to get lunch money. I bought the lunch and offered to buy the stuff he had with notes. He surprised me by accepting. Now Sissle, tell him how you got the cast."

"There were a lot of good negro vaudeville acts to pick from," Sissle said. "The players knew they had little future in vaudeville because of their race and when we told them that we had no money, but would not take them farther than walking distance from New York, they agreed to gamble with us.

"We had planned to call our show 'The Mayor of Jhntown,' but decided that inasmuch as we were going to shuffle along on the road for a while before tackling New York, we would call it 'Shuffle Along. The name stuck.

"We were to open in Trenton, but when we got to the Pennsylvania station Blake backed out."

"Do you blame me?" Blake asked. "I had nothing in my pockets but a railroad ticket to Trenton."

"Be we finally talked Blake into coming along," Sissle explained.

"And what a nightmare was Trenton," Mayer cut in. "After the bills were paid I lacked $20 of having enough to get the troupe to Washington, but I finally found an usher who was saving up for a new suit and upon my promise to send him $30 from Washington he loaned me $20. We had a guarantee in Washington so we breathed easy there for two weeks and moved on to Philadelphia.

"After that came the one night stands for fourteen weeks. We returned to New York $21.000 in debt.

Not a single New York manager wanted our show, but after many days of persistent effort, 'Shuffle Along' got into a little music hall on Sixty-third street. As Blake put it, 'members of the cast got humpbacked from trying to avoid bumping their heads on the ceiling.' But 'Shuffle Along' went over. For fourteen months it played to capacity audiences and then went to Boston, for sixteen weeks. Chicago was next for fifteen weeks, and then it came to St. Louis."

Believe in Education.

Sissle and Blake are clean-cut, serious-minded men who feel that their production is doing much to offset race prejudice. Education they say, is the hope of the negro.

"Negroes," said Sissle, "are naturally clannish, but they look to their white brethren, the big men of the superior race, for leadership. Never forget that a negro would rather be a big man among negroes than a little man among whites."

"Do you feel that you have been handicapped by your race?" they were asked.

"Yes and no," Sissle replied. "Our race has been an asset in the success of 'Shuffle Along,' but a handicap in our song writing. Publishers looked to us for jazz music and would accept such, but when we offered something more serious they would not take it.

"For example, we wrote 'Baby Bunting,' the song hit of 'Elsie,' seven years ago, but could not sell it. 'Two Hearts in Tune,' another song hit of 'Elsie,' also was written several years ago, as were 'My Vision Girl,' 'Mary Ann of Maryland' and several others. But the publishers could not see them until after our success with 'Shuffle Along.'

"Now that we have arrived, so to speak, the handicap of race has been forgotten."

"Do you want more Negro pictures? Do you want to see skilled Negro actors—handsome men and beautiful women take their place with the leading stars of the stage and screen?

Noble Johnson Secures New Universal Contract

Pacific News Bureau

Universal City, Calif.—After several years of independent contracts among various film concerns, Noble Johnson will again be seen under the Universal banner, supporting Roy Stewart in a series of special feature productions under the direction of Stuart Paton.

"Burning Words," a Northwest Mounted story by Harrison Warren Jacobs will be the first of the series produced. The cast includes Roy Stewart, Noble Johnson, Laura La Plante, Harry Carter, William Walsh, Harold Goodwin, Edith Yorke, Alfred Fisher and Geo. McDaniels.

N Y C CALL
FEBRUARY 26. 1923

Now comes the all-Negro motion picture. It is a dramatic photoplay called "Deceit," the first one to be made entirely by members of the Negro race. It will be shown Monday and Tuesday at the New Douglas Theatre at Lenox avenue and 142d street, in the heart of Harlem's Negro belt.

It is billed as a production by Oscar Micheaux, distributed by the Micheaux Film Corporation of Chicago. It is announced as having been written by a Negro, directed by the only Negro motion picture director, and played by a Negro cast.

The star is Evelyn Preer, called "the first colored screen star." Among the paragraphs on the back of an advertising leaflet we read:

Why John Baptist Lost His Head

The above photograph is that of pretty Evelyn Preer, famous movie star, now playing the leading role in Oscar Wilde's "Salome," with the "Ethiopian Players." Sidney Kirkpatrick plays the part of Herod. The staging of this play marks the beginning of a new epoch in the presentation of the drama among colored people.—*D. C. Tribune Photo.*

Theatrical—1923.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

REVUE OF AMERICAN NEGRO ARTISTS

STUDEBAKER THEATER

Fine Art Building, 418 South Michigan Boulevard
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World's Premier Negro Dancer and Teacher. Protegee of the late Aida Overton Walker and her Premier Junior Dancers in
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CLYDE GLASCO, KANSAS CITY, MO.
The Phenomenal Pianist, recently from Paris, France and Munich, Germany, under Mme. Lechetizky.

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In her own arranged Negro Spirituals.

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Distinguished exponent of Leopold Auer. His tone is of the richest quality; technique [illegible] musicianship.

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Ethiopian Art Theater And Its First Program

N Y C SUN
MAY 10, 1923

'Salome' and 'Chip Woman's Fortune' Whets One's Appetite for More Repertory— Tony Sarg's Marionettes Return.

The Ethiopian Art Theater makes a good impression with its first bill of its limited repertory season at the Frazee Theater. The curtain-raiser, "The Chip Woman's Fortune," written by Willis Richardson, a negro, is a very human and realistic playlet that depends more on its character-drawing than on any great complexity of plot. When the "fortune" of *Aunt Nancy*, the old "chip woman" is dug up in the back yard it pays the large balance due on the victrola which *Silas* and *Emma*, with whom she has been living, have been buying on the instalment plan. And, incidentally, paying up on the victrola also saves *Silas* his job. The other characters are *Liza*, the daughter of *Silas* and *Emma* and *Aunt Nancy's* wild but good hearted son *Jim*, just out of prison, a budding romance, and the man who comes for the victrola.

The acting was naturalness itself. Particularly effective was Sydney Kirkpatrick who acted *Silas*. "Acting" is a poor word to describe the work of these players. They seemed actually to live their parts.

It is Kirkpatrick who plays *Herod* in Oscar Wilde's "Salome." In this artificial, exotic and decadent drama, it did not seem to us that he was as successful as he was in the curtain-raiser. But come to think of it he did as well as any *Herods* that we can recall. Miss Evelyn Preer acted and danced as *Salome* with ease, grace and distinction. Yesterday afternoon she contented herself with one veil in her dance. The ensemble acting was excellent, the setting was artistic, the half-light gave just the right effect, and there was never anything strained or unnatural about the grouping of the stage pictures. Altogether, it was a production to be proud of and Raymond O'Neil, the director of the Ethiopian Art Theater is to be congratulated on the artistic results he has achieved. Certainly, this "Salome" is superior to any white production we have seen. We await eagerly the second bill of the repertory season. THE PLAYGOER.

EDNA NORTON SIGNED BY FAMOUS PLAYERS

Big Movie Corporation Engages Famous Colored Screen Star to Support White Stars

By J. A. Jackson

Edna Morton, the little lady whose face has become very familia to film fans of the race thru the Reol productions and the Micheaux pictures in which she has worked fourteen in all, many of which she starred, has been taken up by the directors of films for the general market.

She has just concluded working with Blanche Kennedy in a feature production called "Beyond the Salt Frontier" that will be released soon. Mr. Willard directed the picture for the Famous Players. Just prior to that, she appeared with Thomas Meighan in "The Ne'er Do Well."

BOSTON POST IN "LIZA"

Daily Paper Says Company is "Talented, Peppery and Tuneful"

(Boston Post, May 29, 1923)

Sure fire from its energetic start to its climatic finish, "Liza," an all-colored musical comedy right from a long New York run, landed with two frisky feet and 100 per cent vocal capacity on the stage of the Wilbur Theatre last evening, entering the lists for summer fun honors hereabouts.

Talent and Tunes

There is talent in "Liza," and there are tuneful melodies. There is pep and ginger and people who know their business and are A-1 on showmanship into the bargain. The show moves with admirable precision, stage management has been applied with skilled touch, musical direction is right on the job, and every member of the company from lead to the chorus knows how to do the particular job assigned.

The musical hit of the show is "Liza," which is sung and danced with unparalleled vim and vigor. Then comes "Dandy," and other fast moving rhythmic combination of pedal and vocal activities. There are song numbers and chorus numbers in plenty and enough dancing to supply vaudeville with many an excellent turn.

The story tells the amusing happenings coincident upon the collecting of money for a statue to a departed mayor in a Colored township down South. There is a young lover and a girl who loves him and there is good, wholesome clean fun in plenty.

Among the various gifted members of the "Liza" accumulation of talent are Margaret Simms, a delectable "Liza"; Gertrude Saunders, as a dancer and singer of blues; Miller and Anthony, as fun makers in general; Drayton and Greenlee, dancers and singers; Anna Scroggins, as singer and dancer in miniature; and a singing and dancing chorus of boys and girls who sure can go.

N Y C SUN
MAY 11, 1923

Ethiopian Art Theater.

Waldo Frank, the novelist, has sent from Darien, Conn., the following appreciation of the Ethiopian Art Theater now at the Frazee Theater:

It seems to me that this theater of Raymond O'Neil and his negro players has all the major signs of the true artistic organization. There is, to begin with, no self-consciousness, no virtuosity no false emphasis, no external intellectualism. The creative energy of these artists is so full and so sure of itself that in their hands even the hot-house product, the "Salome" of Wilde, takes on the simple directness of a natural expression; the poetry and power of the Biblical story are made over by the negro genius into a product of the negro poetry and power.

"If the negro is to realize himself culturally in America it will not be through an arbitrary isolation from the influence of his fellow Americans; nor will it be through an archeological and false fixation in his own folklore past. But everything has conspired to make a true contact between the black and the white, and a full contact between the negro and his own present reality, an almost impossible achievement. Yet this is precisely the achievement of Mr. O'Neil and his gifted players. The cultural past of Europe is the heritage of the negro, as of all Americans; and Mr. O'Neil, realizing this, has been unafraid to permit his players to make over Moliere and the Bible in their own image. What he, as the sensitive and learned producer has to give merges remarkably with what the players have to give, as members of perhaps the most spiritually potential of all American races. The result is an aesthetic experience surprising for its poignance and for its suggestion of depths; an adventure that is bound to call forth the creative energy of the negro poet and that, I feel certain, needs only intelligent nurture (an absence from financial worry) to become very significant indeed."

On Tuesday, May 15, the Ethiopian Art Theater will present Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors" at the Frazee Theater. This play, rarely seen here, will be done to a jazz band accompaniment in a manner exceedingly different from the classical fashion which we are accustomed to. Raymond O'Neil, the director and founder of this negro theater, included in its repertory because his players, on a first reading of the play, showed a strong impulse from the start to appropriate Shakespeare's lines and situations to their own vigorous humor, to give its characters a strong native interpretation, and even to improvise them. In giving the negro players the freest scope for their originality and humor, O'Neil feels that they keep the robust, even wild spirit of Shakespeare's comedy.

On the same bill will be another folk play by Willis Richardson, the author of "The Chip Woman's Fortune," which is called "The Broken Banjo."

MILLER AND LYLES HEAD A NEW SHOW

Production to Succeed 'Shuffle Along' Will Have Cast of Sixty Leading Colored Players

JOHNSON WRITES SCORE

Cecil Mack Composed Lyrics and Choral Songs Rehearsed by W. Marion Cook

By J. A. Jackson

Since the separation of Miller and Lyles, and Sissle and Blake, the two teams who were the co-authors and principals in the tremendously successful colored show "Shuffle Along", there has been many rumors and much speculation as to what Miller and Lyles would do next.

It was made plain at the time of the split, early in June, that Sissle and Blake, with some members of the former management would continue with "Shuffle Along." On July 10, Miller and Lyles who had been quietly assembling a company that included all but eight of

the former "shufflers" and enough new faces to total more than sixty people, began rehearsals in Dryant Hall, for a show that they are producing for George White of "Scandals" fame. The production, as yet un-named is based upon a book by Miller and Lyles that is said to be another episode in the lives of the Mayor of Jimtown and his business partner, the two characters that provided the comedy for the "Shuffle" show.

Music for the more than twenty song numbers is by James P. Johnson the foremost Negro pianist and composer, if the recorded number are accepted as a standard of measurement. The Lyrics are by Cecil Mack, the pen name of R. C. McPherson. Will Marion Cook is conducting the choral rehearsals, and Elida Webb is staging the dances. Miller and Lyles are personally supervising the entire production.

The supporting company is a strong one, and includes Mattie Wilkes, Ravella Hughes, Blanche Deas Harris, Onions Jeffries, Paul Floyd, Arthur Porter, Wesley Hill, Bass Woodson, Adelaide Ball, Geo. Stevens, Bass Foster, Ina Duncan, Bessie Allison, Charles Olden, Monty Hawley, Vernon Porter, William Andrews, Percy Colson, Arthur Ray, and a number of others that have been called from both the Negro dramatic and musical comedy first ranks.

The show is scheduled to open for an out of town engagement early in August, after which it will be booked for the season by the Klaw and Erlanger office, with the very great likelihood of being presented at a Broadway house early in the season.

colored show business, is again in harness preparing to go "On the road."

Some years since Jesse abandoned travel. He could well afford to with his business investments in New York, and the frequency with which he was called upon to either produce or revise big white Broadway shows. Then too, he was interested in the progress of the Dressing Room Club of which he is president. Few thought he would ever travel again.

Whether it was the seductiveness of the Whitney Brothers the appeal that their new show held for them, the call of the road, or perhaps the sense of loneliness that pervaded his heart since the loss of his son, an energetic young man of whom he was inordinately proud; can not be told.

The fact remains however that he has become a partner with Homer Tutt, Salem Tutt Whitney, and John T. Gibson, the theatrical financial genius, in the new Smarter Set company which will open Oct. 1, with the show entitled "North ain't South" in New York with a line of Klaw and Erlanger bookings that promises a great season.

Mr. Shipp is one of the most read, most completely educated men in the show business without regard to color, and one of the few of the race that commands the full respect of Broadway, which means the show world.

THE FOOTLIGHTS CALL JESSE SHIPP AGAIN

Veteran Producer of Shows That Made Williams and Walker Famous Joins Whitney Brothers

REFUSED ENGAGEMENT

Turned Down Offer of English Producer at Highest Salary Ever Offered

By J. A. Jackson

Jesse Shipp the producing genius who is responsible for the construction of the series of shows that made Williams and Walker famous, the director who declined the highest salary that at that time had been tendered a stage director in England from the country's wealthiest producing manager rather than desert

GILPIN'S FLOP AT GRAND THEATRE WORST SEEN HERE

Charles Gilpin's flop at the Grand theatre last week was probably the worst thing seen here in many years. After three miserable nights he was retired and another attraction went up in the electric lights

Gilpin came to Chicago widely press-agented as a $2,000 a week attraction. An especially high class vaudeville bill was recruited to support him for the week. Stage critics and theatrical notables throughout the city were notified that the great Gilpin had consented to play for one week at the Grand, and a packed house greeted him on his initial appearance.

He was booked for two shows a night with three shows on Sunday night. He came out on the stage and attempted to put across one or two aged jokes. When these failed, he attempted a song, of which he didn't know the words. He then attempted a character impersonation with more or less difficulty.

An attempt was made to excuse his poor showing at the first show on the ground that he had just rushed into the city and had not been given time to mould his act together. But as show after show went on and Gilpin got worse, if anything, it became apparent to all that he really had nothing to offer.

In his own defense he declared that he was under contract not to reproduce any part of "Emperor Jones." This was as expected. No one expected to see Gilpin in "Emperor Jones," but all did expect him to do something to protect his own reputation as an actor. He is also said to have declared that the patrons of the Grand did not want anything but the regular slapstick stuff.

If this was his opinion, he should have known enough to change it after the first show. Attendance began falling off immediately. Finally, to their credit, the management of the theatre notified Mr. Gilpin that he must improve his act or get out. Whether he could improve or not is a question. But it is certain that he did not. He got out, leaving a bad taste in the South Side's mouth, a taste they will not soon forget.

REFORM NEEDED ON RACE STAGE

Appearance Here of "How Come" Show Revealed Need Both In Plays and Type of Audience

PLOT BURLESQUE RACE

White Reviewers and Auditors Encouraged in Showing Disrespect for Players

The appearance of the "How Come" show in this city where it played to large audiences at the Gayety Theatre for ten days, served to focus attention once more on the theatrical situation, both from a local and national standpoint.

We will treat of the local situation first. As is well known, we have a large well appointed modern theatre in this city, namely, the Douglass, that is suitable for any type of theatrical production. And the fact that the "How Come" show was booked at the Gayety, a white burlesque theatre instead of the Douglass has raised considerable comment.

Douglass A One Night House

The writer questioned Mr. Paul D. Scott, who secured the Baltimore Street house for the show, in regard to the passing up of the "colored" house for the white one, and was told that they were scared away from the Douglass for two reasons: first that the arrangements for lighting and other incidentials necessary to the production of a show were liable to be held up at the last minute, as the result of some outstanding debts, and second, that past experience had proved that colored theatregoers here will not support a colored show, at least, at the Douglass.

Under these conditions, he said, there was nothing else to do but to book the show at a house where white patronage would make up the attendance deficit. In his stand, Mr. Scott was certainly justified, for it is a notorious fact that shows that have been presented in the past at the Douglass have drawn only a fair-sized crowd, even on the opening night, playing practically to empty seats the balance of the week.

Money Versus Self-Respect

So if some theatregoers preferred to remain away from the burlesque house with the regret that the show was not staged at the up-town house, they have only themselves to blame. The management of the "How Come" show declared that they were out for the coin and did not care whose they got.

From a purely mercenary standpoint, we cannot quarrel with them on this score, but in view of the efforts that are being made by increasing groups of our more serious-minded player folk to elevate the Negro stage, we are forced to call attention to some phases of the presentation of the show at a white house, that certainly must have been resented by those who are interested in the elevation of the stage.

In taking this view, we do not mean to disparage the work of any member of the large cast, for almost without a single exception, each was a star in his or her particular line.

Nor is it meant to reflect on the show as a whole, for it was all in all, a fine evening's entertainment.

The resentment we have in mind is first concerned with the plot. In casting about for a framework for the show, it is to be regretted that the librettists could find nothing more commendable than the chicken subject, which with its ally, watermelon, have served the white comedian, humorists and others for a half century or more in burlesquing the Negro.

Burlesqued The Negro

Darkies, chickens and watermelon are three words that have always carried an allied association in the mind of Southern white men when thinking of the Negro. Evidence in proof of this contention is to be found in the fact that two local white reviewers in speaking of the players, referred to them as darkies and one even went so far as to drag in the watermelon stating that they could dance as well as eat watermelon.

We are not attempting to split hairs on the question of whether white people or black people like watermelon best or that it is to either's discredit to like it, but what we are endeavoring to point out is the displeasing spectacle of colored players utilizing a theme that serves to place them in a position to be burlesqued.

Our further resentment concerns the disrespectful attitude of some of the white patrons that witnessed the show Monday evening of its first week's appearance. We saw at least two of them sitting in a box with their hats on and scores of others sitting on the lower floor in their shirt sleeves.

Playwrights Are Needed

We take this latter stand in view of the fact that the leading stars of the show are entitled to audiences which show a greater respect for their talents and also their standing as ladies and gentlemen, and on the additional fact that the show was supposed to cater to colored patronage, and effort was made to attract this patronage.

Finally, we have heard other comment in regard to the policy of segregration that was adopted in the lower floor seating arrangement. The writer was told by Mr. Byars, the advance man of the show, that no segregation would be allowed.

The whole thing summed up serves to emphasize the fact that there is yet much to be done in the matter of elevating the Negro stage and furthermore, that the time is more than ripe for the appearance of playwrights of the race who will give us intelligent worth-while comedies and dramas that will reflect credit and not ridicule upon the race.

W. E. B.

Black and White Show Is Larger

Jimmie Cooper, Burlesque Magnate, Announces Show Will Open on Columbia Circuit

Jimmie Cooper, the burlesque magnate, who last season made the Gonzelle White company the talk of burlesque circles, and who last summer installed a two-part attraction called the "Black and White Review" in Boston that became the high spot of the city's theatrical offerings, announced from his New York office that he will open on the Columbia circuit this season with a show similar to the Boston attraction, with even more colored people in it than were on the program there.

That revue presented a first act with an entirely white cast and chorus. In the second act twenty Negroes, principals and chorus, were offered. The two types were thus offered on one bill, with complete separation of the workers and with complete satisfaction to the audience. "Jimmie Cooper's Revue" will be precisely that sort of show [illegible] larger and more elaborate.

Theatrical — 1923.

Individual Troupes etc.

SUDANESE NEGRO TO PLAY ROLE OF "EMPEROR JONES"

Eugene O'Neill's Drama To Be Acted In French In The Palais Bourbon

Paris, May 11.—Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" will be played in French at the official residence of Raoul Peret, President of the Chamber of Deputies, on May 16, the occasion being the grand Franco-American fete.

A colored actor—the only one in Europe—will play the leading part, a Sudanese framed Bengalia. He is a man of good education, has acted in screen plays and speaks refined French, having studied at Oran, Algeria.

"The Emperor Jones" will be staged at the Odenon under Gemier's management after its performance at the statesman's residence.

PLANTATION REVIEW REACHES LONDON

LONDON, May 10.—Florence Mills and the "Plantation Review" from New York have arrived in London. They appeared May 14 in Cochran's "From Dover Street to Dixie." Unemployed English actors and actresses are said to be jealous of the invasion of the colored artists in London.

"HOW COME" DRAWS $10,000

NEW YORK.—The "How Come" Show, that failed to make an impression to warrant its staying at the Apollo Theater on Broadway, did a $10,000 business last week at the Lafayette, in the colored district. The show is likely to remain for a summer run. It is attracting a lot of white patronage to the house. The Friday midnight show did more than $2,000. The week was the first that netted a return to Ben Harris, who has $86,000 invested in the production. First class billing is largely responsible for the result.

"SHUFFLE ALONG"

"Shuffle Along," with Sissle & Blake featured, opened a two weeks' engagement at Toronto, Canada, on Monday. The colored musical comedy which carries them to Pittsburgh, Pa., and Cleveland, Ohio, for double engagements, single weeks at Milwaukee, Wis., and St. Paul, Minn., and then Chicago for a run. Lottie Gee and the four Harmony Kings are with this show which carries 50 people.

Gilpin to Appear Soon in New Play

(By The Associated Negro Press)

CHICAGO, Ill., Aug. 24—Charles Gilpin, Negro actor, is at the Grand Theater here this week in a serious tabloid which carries his audience to heights almost equal to those of his famed characterization of "Emperor Jones." Packed houses have greeted Mr. Gilpin, who is to appear soon in the O'Neil play in London, England.

Another Colored Musical Comedy

Joe Sheftall's revue, one of the cleverest little colored musical comedy tabloids that has been seen in vaudeville is to be expanded into a full-sized show.

Maceo Pinkard, who wrote the music for the "Liza" show, and Jones and Jones a comedy act in vaudeville are consolidating their talents, and will produce a show of about thirty-five people. The concern is to be incorporated as there is an outside investor associated with them.

The show which is not intended for Broadway will be in charge of Sheftall with an employed manager. Pinkard will direct the orchestra and a pair of saxaphones will be carried to augment the house orchestra. Rehearsals commenced on June 4, and the production is expected to be ready by the latter part of the month.

VALENTINO IN COLORED HOUSE

To Milton B. Starr goes the credit for trying to bring to the patrons of the colored houses the better known performers of both races. Thru a New York agent he has presented a number of first-class colored acts from the big time in his own theatre. The Bijou, in Nashville, Tenn. The experiment has been a costly one for him since the other managers have not co-operated as fully as they might have in the progressive move. However, Mr. Starr has persisted and his associates are fast learning the value of his ideas.

His latest move has been to secure Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Valentino and their company, including the orchestra, for a June date. This is the first appearance the film star has made before a colored audience. This following so close upon the Bishop tour, the engagement of the "Unloved Wife" Company and Mr. Starr's recent inquiries for information on the best Negro acts in the profession without regard to circuit connections or present salary, indicates his intention to elevate the plane of Negro theatricals on his circuit.

N. Y. C. SUN
MAY 11, 1923

Negro Actors Are Nervous Over Appearance in London

LONDON, May 11.—Florence Mills and the "Plantation" troupe of colored performers from New York arrived in London to-day, a little nervous about their possible reception when they appear May 14 in Cochran's "From Dover Street to Dixie," because of the storm in the theatrical world over the colored invasion. Although another negro troupe playing here has made a hit, their presence is protested by jobless English actors. The color line war is said to have been accountable for the disappearance of all but two American negro jazz bands.

There was impression here that Florence Mills was a big "mammy" type of person. "I guess people who expected a big woman will be disappointed," she said to-day. "I weigh only 106 pounds."

"Shuffle Along" Hero Signs Contract For $106,000 Yearly To Star For Film Corp

To Split Salary With Manager—Will Be Seen In Full Length Production

(Special to Pittsburgh American)

CHICAGO, Ill., June 1.—The Southern Film Company of Chicago, which has been experimenting with one reel Negro comedies peopled by all colored casts, will presently plunge on a full length production. The Valentine of this company is none other than Noble Sissle, hero and librettist of "Shuffe-Along" at the Forest Theater. For him will be builded a production big with laughter on his return from Europe in the fall. Sissle yesterday signed a contract with the president of the film company. Sissle was asked what salary he would want. He hadn't believed all he had read about the fortune of Douglas Fairbanks and Wm. S. Hart, and stuttered:

"I think I ought to have t-t-t-"

"How," interrupted the president, would two thousand a week do, to be split by yourself and your manager, Mr. Al Mayer?"

"Just what I was saying," was Sissle's inspired response, and he wrote his name on the contract.

Silas Green Buys New Pullman Car

Charles Collier, owner of the "Silas Green from New Orleans" Co. with very just pride sends a letter from which the following is extracted:—

"I have purchased what I can truthfully state is one of the finest show cars in the business. We are having it fitted with steel underframe, electric lights, hot and cold running water, ladies and men's wash rooms, two large lockers, a kitchen, a combined office and state room, 26 foot baggage end, and accommodations for sleeping 46 people." It is 78 feet over all.

"We have been enjoying wonderful success. Still it is not to be wondered at . . . . Every year I change the show from start to finish, present entirely new costumes, and persistly decline to permit and smut or even suggestiveness."

Carnival Will Open In New Orleans

New Orleans, Aug. 15 (Associated Negro Press)—The first carnival staged by colored talent in this city is scheduled for ten days beginning Aug. 11, by the Bulls Aid and Pleasure Club, one of the leading colored organizations in the south. The carnival will include a midway, replete with concessions, various rides, music and dancing, clowns and other form of amusement. Those in charge of the affair are Albert Simpson, Jerome Young, Thomas Henry, Jr.; Warren Barlow, Henry Smith, C. J. Fisher, Charles Wyatt, Alex Wilson and others equally as prominent.

YOUTHFUL COLORED ACTOR

Turns Down Movie Contract For Education.

Long Beach, Cal., April 2.—Pacific News Bureau—How many 13 year old boys would prefer going to school in preference to drawing an or more as a film actor?

Well, this is just what Leon Perlue, a little colored boy living on Prospect ave., did recently when he was offered a contract calling for a nice fat salary as a juvenile actor for one of the large Hollywood film producers.

Leon, who is 13 years old and a sophomore in the Pholy High School, began his film career several years ago as an extra working with Baby Marie Osburne and the well known colored juvenile comedy star, Ernest Morrison, better known as "Sunshine Sammy." Since then he has played in a number of successful films, the most notable of them being Booth Tarkington's "Penrod."

Altho Leon and his mother are by no means wealthy, and a film contract would bring in sufficient money to place them in very comfortabel circumstances, they feel that a good school education is by far more valuable for Leon at the present than a film contract, no matter how attractive.

Leon, however, is ambitious and as a page in connection with the exhibit of the Hoover Cacuum Sweeper Company at the big industrial exposition being held in Long Beach, he is accumulating a bank account without sacrificing his educational training.

British Dancers Step To Purified Version Of American "Blues"

London, August 18.—The "Blues," not the slightly indecorous American interpretation of the negro ballad music, but an English purification thereof, are being hailed as the dance sensation of the London winter season.

It is officially announced that all of London which keeps atune with the times will be dancing the "blues" this winter. The newspapers are full of diagrams, pictures and interviews describing the new steps, which are identified as a slow, shuffling combination of waltz and foxtrot.

The president of the imperial dancing teachers' congress takes pains to announce that "we eliminated all objectionable features from the American version and have evolved a dance which will be acceptable to the British public."

One hundred dancing teachers have been inocculated with the "blues" virus and have gone forth as missionaries who will enlighten the provinces in the new art.

...engagement of Charles S. Gilpin to appear in London in "The Emperor Jones," has been set back until the opening of the regular season. In the meantime Gilpin will appear in a tabloid drama in vaudeville houses for a brief season, beginning about June 18. The act will run about twenty minutes and will require only three people. While the name of the act has not been definitely determined, it is altogether likely to be called "White Mule."

N Y C TELEGRAPH
AUGUST 11, 1923

Abbie Mitchell Coming Over.

Abbie Mitchell, the colored actress and wife of Will Marion Cook, is coming to this country shortly to uplift the drama. She has been in London for the last two years appearing in a condensed version of "The Eyes of Youth," in which Marjorie Rambeau appeared here.

Miss Mitchell's first appearance of the season on this side will be made with the Bishop-Lafayette Colored Stock Company, who take over the Grand in Chicago on September 2, with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" as the opening attraction.

BROOKLYN STAND'D UNION
JUNE 2, 1923

Colored Grand Opera

The likelihood of colored grand opera being produced next season in Manhattan is inseparably tied up with the sensational success, "Shuffle Along," the rollicking all-colored musical gem which will be seen for first time in Brooklyn at the Teller-Shubert next week.

If "Shuffle Along" had not rounded out over 500 consecutive nights at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall, which became the meeting place of New York's smart society, and duplicated its success in Chicago, colored grand opera would still be a dream. But now, this hankering hardened into resolution by the success of "Shuffle Along," the people who have all along believed in colored grand opera are going to stage it. Their plans as yet are in nebulous, and they haven't said much in public, but it is known that Miller and Lyles and Sissle and Blake, authors and co-stars of "Shuffle Along," and other well-known white men who are prominent Broadway producers are working together towards the grand opera goal. Lottie Lee, the pint-sized prima donna in "Shuffle Along," has a voice which comes to mind in a review of the colored race's possibilities as a source of grand opera stars. Many voices that have enthralled audiences have been supplied by the race. Anyone in close touch to-day could concoct a colored cast of any opera very quickly. Although no announcement has been made, the report is persistent that arrangements have gone so far that following "Shuffle Along's" London engagement is the time of the debut on Broadway.

PHILADELPHIA PA RECORD
MAY 22, 1923

OSCAR WILDE'S "SALOME" PRESENTED AT DUNBAR

Colored Players Ambitious Production of Erotic Play.

Oscar Wilde's "Salome," in one act, in dramatic form, was presented at the Dunbar Theatre last evening by The ...ctors assembled and directed by Raymond O'Neill. This company had met with success in New York and those who saw "Salome" last evening had reason to congratulate themselves. The performance was an excellent one in every detail. The cast, quite a large one, was impressive and there was no lack of dramatic fire either in the acting or the reading of the lines. The staging of the play was notably well done and the costumes were appropriate to the period.

"Salome" is the product of an artist with a peculiar view of the moralities, but he possessed the skill to bring out the frivolities and sensualities of the days of Herod, when the old religion was being transformed and Roman paganism was at its apex, on the eve of its collapse. In its declamatory side "Salome" had many fine features. The work of Evelyn Prees as Salome was a keen and searching bit of portraiture, in which the gifted actress put her whole soul. Miss Prees made of the character a passionate, revengeful spirit, who, thwarted of her desires, imposed upon Herod a price for her dancing that was grewsome and astounding. Impressive and awesome was the interpretation of John. The words of the prophet were given with dramatic fervor. Meritorious, too, was the work of Sidney Kirkpatrick as Herod, Laura Bowman as Herodias and Arthur Thompson as Tigellinus.

This initial performance evoked much applause and demonstrated that the company has rare talent for difficult dramatic productions. There was a playlet with much humor as a curtain-raiser, which told of some domestic embarrassments of a pecuniary nature.

From Late Editions of Yesterday's TIMES.

"EMPEROR JONES" IN PARIS.

Eugene O'Neill's Play Receives a Warm Welcome Abroad.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PARIS, Oct. 31.—Eugene O'Neill's play, "Emperor Jones," which met such wide success in America two years ago, tonight made good in France after passing the ordeal of translation into another language and interpretation by persons almost wholly unacquainted with its background. It made its appearance at a gala performance at the Odeon Theatre and while leaving some of the audience guessing, was generally heartily applauded.

The translation of the play was good and the presentation was almost a masterpiece of artistic skill. The acting was excellent. Bengila, the French Colonial negro who interpreted "Emperor Jones" was a fitting successor to the creator of the part. So remarkable was his understanding and interpretation of the rôle that after several years it is difficult to say if he fell short in any way of the high standard set him by Gilpin. One thing is certain—tonight's performance raised American playwrights one step higher in the estimation of the French.

The play, translated by Maurice Bourgeo, is presented under the auspices of the Association Française Désposition et d'Exchange Artistique, the proceeds of which are for the erection of a memorial to athletes and sportsmen who gave their lives in the war.

SPLIT OF "SHUFFLE" AUTHORS CLOSE SH'W

Company Disbands at At lantic City After 3 Year's Run When Composers Disagree

STARS JOIN NEW SHOWS

Miller and Lyles Sign With White Revue, S Blake With Boardw Cafe

By J. A. Jackson

Wilfred R. Doin, of the sta he Atlantic City, N. J., Th azette, and special corresp or many of the town papers eport that the original "Sh Along" company closed its p nomial three years' continuc season at the Apollo Theatre, hat city on June 23.

Dissatisfaction between the four principals has been growing for some time. A number of causes have been assigned, but Sissle and Blake in an interview with Mr. Doin, stated that it grew out of Miller and Lyles desire to participate in the royalties on the song numbers made famous by the show. It is reported that the latter have been engaged for a Geo. White's production. So strained were the relations between the people, that when "Auld Lang Syne," was sung at the final curtain some of the members of the com walked off the stage.

Sissle and Blake have opened a "Plantation Days" Revue at La Marne cafe on the boardwalk in conjunction with Roy Smith and band. The opening performance took five encores. Mildred Smallwood, Johnnie Hudgins, and a number of the former "Shuffle Along" people were in the cast. Among those are Lottie Gee, Bob Davis, and the Four Harmony Kings. Mr. Sissle's grandmother was a guest at the opening.

Theatrical — 1923.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

Negro Players Appearing on Broadway
New York City, Season, 1922—23.

APOLLO

Commencing Monday Evening, April 16, 1923
CRITERION PRODUCTIONS, INC.
OFFER
The Billboard
New York City
HOW COME?

A Girly Musical Darkomedy in Two Acts and Ten Scenes; Score by Ben Harris; Book by Eddie Hunter; Additional Numbers by Henry Creamer and Will H. Vodery.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In the Order of Their Appearance)

Deacon Long Tack ..... Andrew Fairchild
Sarah Green ..... Alice Brown
Brother Wire Nail ..... Leroy Broomfield
Dolores Love ..... Nina Hunter
Sister Doolittle ..... Hilary Friend
Ebenezer Green ..... Amon Davis
Brother Ham ..... Alec Lovejoy
A Smart Lawyer ..... Chappy Chappelle
Malinda Joy ..... Juanita Stinette
Rufus Wise ..... George W. Cooper
Rastus Skunkton Lime ..... Eddie Hunter
Dandy Dan ..... George C. Lane
Ophelia Snow ..... Andrew Tribble
Brother Low Down ..... James Dingbat
Sister Whale ..... Betty Throck
Chief of Police ..... Sidney Bechet
First Policeman ..... Harry Hunter
Second Policeman ..... Adrian Joyce
Third Policeman ..... Isaac Momen
Cathrine Place ..... Helen Dunmore
Laurette Wise ..... Vivian Harris
Millie Johnson ..... Mabel Kemp
Marie Fraine ..... Dorothy Lewis
Ruth Johnson ..... Elvetta Davis
Hortense Carter ..... Carrie Edwards
Investors in the Mobile Chicken Trust Corp., Honorary Board of Directors, M. C. T. C.

SYNOPSIS: Act I.—Mobile, Ala. Scene 1—Corporation Meeting, Lawn of Green's Home. Scene 2—A Rest Cure. Scene 3—A Back Yard. Scene 4—A Jail. Scene 5—A Railroad Station. Act II.—Chicago, Ill. Scene 1—A Drug Store. Scene 2—A Cafe. Scene 3—A Bootleg Parlor. Scene 4—(Six Months Later.) Hall in Mansion of R. S. Lime, Esq. Scene 5—Ball Room of Same.

Production Staged by Sam H. Grisman.
CLOSED MAY 19, 1923
40 Performances

The Billboard
Have you a copy of last week's Billboard? Every Negro performer should have a copy filed away for reference, for the Fall Special contains in the pages from 84 to 126 an index that includes the name of every actor who has appeared on Broadway during the past year. A complete and authentic history of "Strut, Miss Lizzie", "The Plantation Revue", "Liza", "How Come" and the Ethiopian Art Players, with the names of performers, is included. Get one and kill the need of "behind the stove" arguments as to who has been on Broadway. The index is a feature of the Fall Special every year.
Sept. 15, 1923 Ed.

EARL CARROLL

Beginning Saturday Evening, June 9, 1922
THE CREOLE PRODUCING CO.
—Presents—
STRUT, MISS LIZZIE
The Billboard

A Musical Revue in Two Acts and Fourteen Scenes by Creamer and Layton

THE CAST—Barrett and Fredericks, Alice Lemone, Dick Stewart, Green and Burnett, Moore and Fields, Creamer and Layton, Georgette Harvey, Ches. Fredericks, Pearl Johnson, Jean Rounditree, Hamtree Harrington, Kid Ann, Hudson and Holliday, Eddie Saparo, Florabelle Wise Added to Cast July 17, 1922.

Moved from National Winter Garden to Times Square June 19, 1922.
Moved to Earl Carroll Theatre July 20, 1922.
CLOSED AUGUST 26, 1922
96 Performances

DALY'S

Commencing Monday Evening, November 27, 1922
The Billboard
New York City
AL DAVIS
PRESENTS
LIZA
9-1-23

Book by Irvin C Miller; Lyrics and Music by Maceo Pinkard; Special Lyrics by Nat Vincent

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In the Order of Their Appearance)

Squire Norris ..... Alonzo Fenderson
Lisa Norris ..... Margaret Simms
Nora ..... Gertrude Saunders
Uncle Pete ..... William Simms
Parson Jordan ..... Packer Ramsey
Judge Plummer ..... Quintard Miller
Ras Johnson ..... R. Eddie Greenlee
Dandy ..... Thaddius Drayton
The Sheriff ..... Will A. Cook
Ice Cream Charlie ..... Irvin C. Miller
Bodiddily ..... Emmett Anthony
Tom Liggett ..... Billy Mills
John Jones ..... Doe Doe Green
Mammy ..... Elizabeth Terrill
Mandy ..... Maude Russell
Harry Davis ..... Snippy Mason
Bill Jones ..... Donald Fields
Brown-Skin Vamps, Jimtown Flappers, Dancing Honey Girls, Struttin' Dandies

SYNOPSIS: Act I.—Scene 1—In Front of Squire Norris's Home. Scene 2—Town Jail. Scene 3—Sam Sykes' Barber Shop. Scene 4—A Street in Jimtown. Scene 5—"On the Levee." Act II.—Scene 1—Jimtown Square. Scene 2—A Street in Jimtown. Scene 3—Jimtown Graveyard. Scene 4—Street in Jimtown. Scene 5—Corridor of Jimtown Ball Room. Scene 6—The Ball Room.

Time—Summer Time
Place—Jimtown, South Carolina
Entire Production Staged by Walter Brooks
Moved to Nora Bayes Theater, March 12, 1923
CLOSED APRIL 21, 1923
172 Performances

PLAN CIRCUIT FOR ALL-COLORED REVUES

The Billboard

New York, Aug. 26.—Leonard Harper, of the vaudeville team of Harper and Blanks, is associated with Joe Ward, producer, in staging a new colored revue for The Hollywood, at Forty-ninth street and Broadway, formerly known as the Palais de Dance. The show will open September 1, with Harper and Blanks as the principals of a company of seventeen, including the chorus. 9-1-23

Everard Dabney's Ginger Band of six pieces will supply the music. The revue will be elaborately staged with several new effects brought from Europe by Mr. Harper, who went over with "Plantation Days", which played at the Empire Palace, London, under the direction of Sir Alfred Butt. While in London he was signed by Joe Ward for some new projects. New York City

A circuit of cabarets playing all-colored revues is being formed by Harper and Ward and such shows will be staged for a number of cafes all over the country. Another revue under the management of Harper is the one playing at Connies, underneath the Lafayette Theater in Harlem.

48TH STREET

The Billboard
Commencing Monday Evening, July 17, 1922
LEW LESLIE
Presents
THE PLANTATION REVUE
9-1-23

Words and Music by Roy Turk and Russell J. Robinson

THE CAST—Shelton Brooks, H. S. Thompson, Lottie Keane, Florence Mills, Juanita Stinette, Chappy Chappelle, Johnnie Dunn, Edith Wilson.

CLOSED AUGUST 12, 1922
33 Performances

SALOME

The Billboard
By Oscar Wilde
CAST OF CHARACTERS

Young Syrian ..... Arthur Ray
Page of Herodias ..... Lionel Monagas
First Soldier ..... Lewis Alexander
Second Soldier ..... Coy Applewhite
Cappadocian ..... Charles Olden
Jokanaan ..... Solomon Bruce
Salome ..... Evelyn Preer
Herod ..... Sydney Kirkpatrick
Herodias ..... Laura Bowman
First Jew ..... Charles Olden
Second Jew ..... George Jackson
Third Jew ..... Walter White
Tigellinus ..... Arthur Thompson
Slave of Herodias ..... Marion Taylor
Slave Girls, etc.

Scene—A Terrace in the Palace of Herod
Setting and Costumes Designed by Geo. Clisbee
Tour Under Direction of Syndicate Attractions Circuit, Inc.
CLOSED MAY 13, 1923
8 Performances

Theatrical—1924.

Individual Troupes. etc.

Mixed Races in the Drama

There is a great deal more hysteria in the American atmosphere on the race question at this time than is good for the country. The least provocation creates a situation at once ugly and dangerous, when there should be nothing ugly or dangerous to create. It depends largely upon the public temper, which has to be created, and a systematic campaign covering a long period of years has created. It is to be hoped that no serious thing will come out of it, but it will require a miracle to prevent it, as we go along.

From the beginning of the Christian era the Jew has been singled out by the Christian people to be denied, hounded and persecuted, and he is still being crucified; but the Jew has quite overcome his enemies, in the United States at least, by saying little, mastering the learning of the times and getting hold of the sources of National and International wealth in such a way as to control them, or have a positive voice in their control. Now, the white Christians have, it appears, shifted their persecution of the Jew to persecution of the Negro, and it is the business of the Negro to find a way to overcome his enemies as the Jew has. Will he do it? Of course. He is a marked people, and his enemies cannot kill him nor permanently shut him out.

The **New York World,** which claims to be a good friend to the Negro, and should be as it is a Jew, has raised a storm where there was none, over the new play by Eugene O'Neill, called, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," because the leading characters in it are a black man and a white woman, man and wife, and the wife has to kiss the hand of the husband, and all that, as if the thing were new on the stage or in actual life. Such a clamor has been made about producing the play that announcement has been made that it will not be produced until April, perhaps.

The World's contention that intermarriage is unlawful in many states and that it is not safe to fly in the face of public opinion in such matters, has been met with the argument that art should not be fettered and that mixing of the races in the drama is much older than Shakespeare's "Othello" and would undermine Christianity itself, which is based on the spiritual fatherhood of the Christians in Abraham; which being interpreted is Father Abram of Ham of Arabia.

It has also been suggested that a white Negro lady could have been selected for the part, as we have white Negro ladies a plenty, instead of a white lady, while responsibility for the existence of the white Negro ladies is entirely overlooked. They did not beget themselves white; they had to be begotten. By whom? By those who howl most persistently and loudly about mixing of the races on and off the stage. It i a queer conditions of affairs, and v have to believe that it will work its out, as the Jewish question of race standing has worked itself out, to satisfaction of the Negro if not to t who spend so much time attendi his business as to neglect their ow

ROSEANNE QUITS FOR GOOD

Hurtig and Seamon Announce They Are Thru With Play For Keeps

LEVY QUITS TOO

Originator of the "Lafayette Players" Sings the Blues About Fickle Theatregoer

By J. A. Jackson

Hurtig and Seamon, a trade publication, announces "Roseanne" will not start again.

Further, the article quotes Mr. Robert Levy, the pioneer promoter of the Original Lafayette Players, and the Reol Pictures, as saying that he is also off colored amusement ventures for keeps. His plaint is that Negro amusement buyers are fickle and possessed of a peculiar psychic complex, and that they preferred t opatronize the galleries of white theatres for theirs.

We appreciate the service of Mr. Levy in giving the financial backing that helped develop latent dramatic talent that would have perhaps lain dormant for a while longer.

But we cannot but remark that Mr. Levy was not a philanthropist, nor in the game for Negro culture. He, like all theatrical venturers, went into the gamble with the knowledge that the chances were equal for winning or losing. This element of chance is no more acute in the Negro theatre-goers than in any other.

The "cat is let out of the bag" at the end of the article, when Mr. Levy states that when he entered the business he encountered Jno. T. Gibson and three other men who had acquired handsome bank balances from the colored amusement game. Thus, according to our reasoning, we gather that had he duplicated the successes of these four he would have found the colored patronage tractable and all right. Mr. Levy adds this sage and witty observation, "The colored show patron is the craftiest since Noah's wife went to buy her rainproof bathrobe."

We cannot but coincide with the latter statement, but since promoters go into these ventures on their own initiative and with their eyes wide open, why try to lash the "poor colored people" into paying for what they do not want? They earn their money and will spend it just as they darn please regardless of Mr. Robert Levy or anyone else. For where they have passed you by, dear sir, others have given them what they wanted, and tnat is what they'll pay for.

MAR 14 1924

INVITING SUPPRESSION

Eugene O'Neill, the eccentric author of "The Hairy Ape," is rehearsing for early production in New York a play in which a white leading woman plays opposite a negro leading man, and the story of which requires a white girl to "kiss the hand of the negro whose wife she has become." There have been advance criticisms of this dramatic production as an offense against decency and racial integrity, and no criticism on such grounds could be too severe. But it has remained for the New York World to remind the producers of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" that such a performance would not only be condemned throughout the country but would probably be pronounced illegal in more than half of the states. Says the World:

"The marriage of white with negro persons, defined as miscegenation, is illegal and punishable as a crime in more than half of the states of the Union; in all Southern and border states, of course, and in such great Northern and Western states as Indiana, California, Colorado, Nebraska Montana. Even in states where such marriages are legal, as in New York, they are condemned by nearly the unanimous sentiment of both races, desirous of protecting their racial integrity. A play dealing with such a marriage of a white woman and a colored man is in rehearsal. That is to say, an act which is illegal in more than half of the nation and is disapproved in the entire country is to be presented in a manner indicating approval in a public theatre.

"The dramatic production in question is needlessly offensive, perhaps dangerous. It can serve no artistic or moral purpose. Without inquiring too curiously into the police powers of the state as affectnig such ill-advised performances, the managers who have this play in preparation should withdraw it and cancel the production."

New York Times - May 2[illegible], 1924

MARCH

Paul Robeson, the Negro Actor Who Is Now Achieving Success at the Provincetown Playhouse in Two Plays by Eugene O'Neill—the Familiar "Emperor Jones" and the Provocative "All God's Chillun Got Wings."

Theatrical - 1924
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK CITY TIMES
MAY 18, 1924

AMONG THE NEW PLAYS

Mixed Marriages: a Word to the Unco Guid —Lew Fields as a Classic Composer— A Not Too Wonderful Visit

By JOHN CORBIN.

"ALL God's Chillun Got Wings"—it is a title suggestive of brotherly love and respect; but from the moment the Provincetown Players announced the production of Eugene O'Neill's play it was evident that we were in for a campaign of race hatred and bigotry differing in no essential from the propaganda of the Klansmen. A white woman married to a huge black man, kneeling on the floor before him and kissing his hand—the exhibition and contemplation of such a thing could only incite to miscegenation, work corruption to the very blood and essence of our Americanism!

Volsteadeans of the Drama.

THE verdict is highly characteristic of our post-war mood, of its febrile weakness and hysterical exaggeration. In saying this I am aware that I run the risk of misunderstanding, misrepresentation. Let me add with all possible emphasis that I do not believe in mixed marriages, especially between races as different as the white and the black. Common observation tells us that in many respects, both mental and moral, the average negro is inferior to the average white, and the army mental tests have strongly confirmed it. Biologists from Darwin and Spencer down have said the same. Many of them add that wide outbreeding, like hybridization, tends to develop the less desirable traits of both stocks. Here also common observation falls in line. Livingstone reports a saying of the native Africans that a negro is a man and a white man a man, but a half-breed an incarnate devil. Yet the biologic explanation does not seem to me to have been established. The mental tests, certainly show that the intelligence of the negro rises in proportion to his mingling of white blood. If there is a moral deterioration it is probably due not to heredity but to environment—to the lack of racial tradition, of strong home influence. It is as if the mulatto and quadroon threw off the simpler virtues of the negro without taking on the complex morale of white civilization. Much is to be accounted for, moreover, by the white negro's rage against discriminations that are at best cruel and at worst hideously unjust. Yet the fact remains, whatever its explanation. Ethically and biologically, mixed marriages are undesirable—a crime against the future of our people.

It is, in fact, precisely because the situation is thus serious that it is necessary to look upon it calmly, dispassionately, bringing to bear the clear north light of common sense. It is an old foible, this, of confronting a moral issue in the mood of the ostrich, thinking we escape a danger by burying our heads in the sand. Instinctively we are all prohibitionists, John Roach Stratons. Especially in the drama, a new theme has only to be broached, a new problem posed, to arouse the Volsteadean furies.

When John Blair and Mary Shaw produced Ibsen's "Ghosts" the Old Guard, headed by William Winter, called down the wrath of high Heaven. To the realist unafraid only two questions were of importance. Was the theme of "Ghosts" vital, and was it developed seriously, intelligently? The answer, which at that time could only be guessed, was made manifest of late when Eleonora Duse played Mrs. Alving, crowding the Century Theatre with her votaries and Ibsen's. After "Ghosts" came "Mrs. Warren's Profession." This time the answer to those questions was negative; but almost without exception the critics assailed the play on Volsteadean grounds and a misguided Police Commissioner jailed the company. The result is worth recalling. Policeman McAdoo received a severe reprimand from the Judge in the case, and the critics found themselves obliged to assist (as the French say) at several endeavors to revive the dreary play, which had never been viable.

Peculiarly significant was the case of the "Salome" of Oscar Wilde and Richard Strauss. The directors of the Metropolitan Opera (than whom there were none more conspicuously public in the profession of morals) suppressed it after a single performance—to the great subsequent delight of Oscar Hammerstein and to his considerable financial profit. The horrors of the unco guid are ever a lure to the godless. If the Metropolitan pundits had sat tight, the chances were ten to one that the opera would have departed this life forever as the result of its own corruption.

The theme of "All God's Chillun" is undoubtedly vital. In most of our cities there are slums like that which Mr. O'Neill depicts, in which black and white children mingle from infancy, playing together and going to the same schools. Mixed marriages are by no means uncommon. As to Mr. O'Neill's handling of his situation, it is perhaps better not to speak here. These lines are of necessity written before the production—the verdict upon which will, however, be rendered before they appear. Much depends upon the mood and the intention revealed in the actual performance. But the point of chief importance is that we should not again lose our heads or bury them in the sand.

Mr. O'Neill is the foremost of our playwrights, probably the most distinguished talent which our theatre has yet produced. In the past he has treated vital themes vitally and simply—with ample intelligence and broad human sympathies. He is entitled to his hearing. And if the multitudes who are already objecting are wise, they will not lift the production on the wave of factitious sensation. If its message is of moment, let us sit by and hearken to it. If not, the right thinking of the few, together with the right feeling of the many, may be trusted to render a fitting verdict.

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"The Melody Man."

TO paraphrase the Gallic saying about ghosts, one does not believe in Lew Fields as a classic musician but one laughs at him. Never in the world did he compose "The Dresden Symphony" which an American song writer jazzes into "The Moonlight Mammy"; but when he hears the result his slant, shocked face and St. Vitus knees, his sardonic speech and his quivering, inarticulate rages, revive the old laughter of those palmy days when he and Joe Weber crowded the wall of Augustin Daly.

Per contra, one does believe in the heroine, his daughter, and repudiates her utterly—or at least this one did, in spite of a special weakness for authentic golden blonds. For she marries the syncopating thief who stole the melody and, swollen with insolence and ragtime royalties, turns against the old musician. In a heroine of romance on "The Music Master" order it is conduct passing strange. And, curiously enough, it seems to be motivated, as the dramatic workshop students say, not only by the character of our heroine but by the need of a happy ending. Up to the last act the syncopating Knave of Hearts has been a cad and bully; but it is eventually necessary to make the marriage happy. So our heroine, who has been brought up on Beethoven in a garret, becomes herself a cad and a bully—falls for the glamour of European travel, for Parisian model gowns and titled society, and browbeats the old composer of symphonies. It is all, I repeat, quite believable. Even golden blonds do that sort of thing—perhaps golden blonds especially. But pity 'tis 'tis true—to my mind, at least. To the audience in general, it must be admitted, this gilding of refined gold (not too refined) seemed the most natural thing in the world and the happiest of all possible happy endings. As W. J. Henderson has pointed out, the great composers are no longer that, but only decomposers. What brighter project, what thriftier trade, than to decompose them into moonlight mammies? One even suspected the audience of being rather sorry for Lew Fields when, after a reconciliation with his golden daughter, the playwright exiled him from Broadway and ragtime, committing him for life to symphonic music in Dresden.

Not to put too fine a point on it, "The Melody Man" is about as far as possible from being a good play. But why should it be a good play? Isn't it enough that it is Broadway entertainment?

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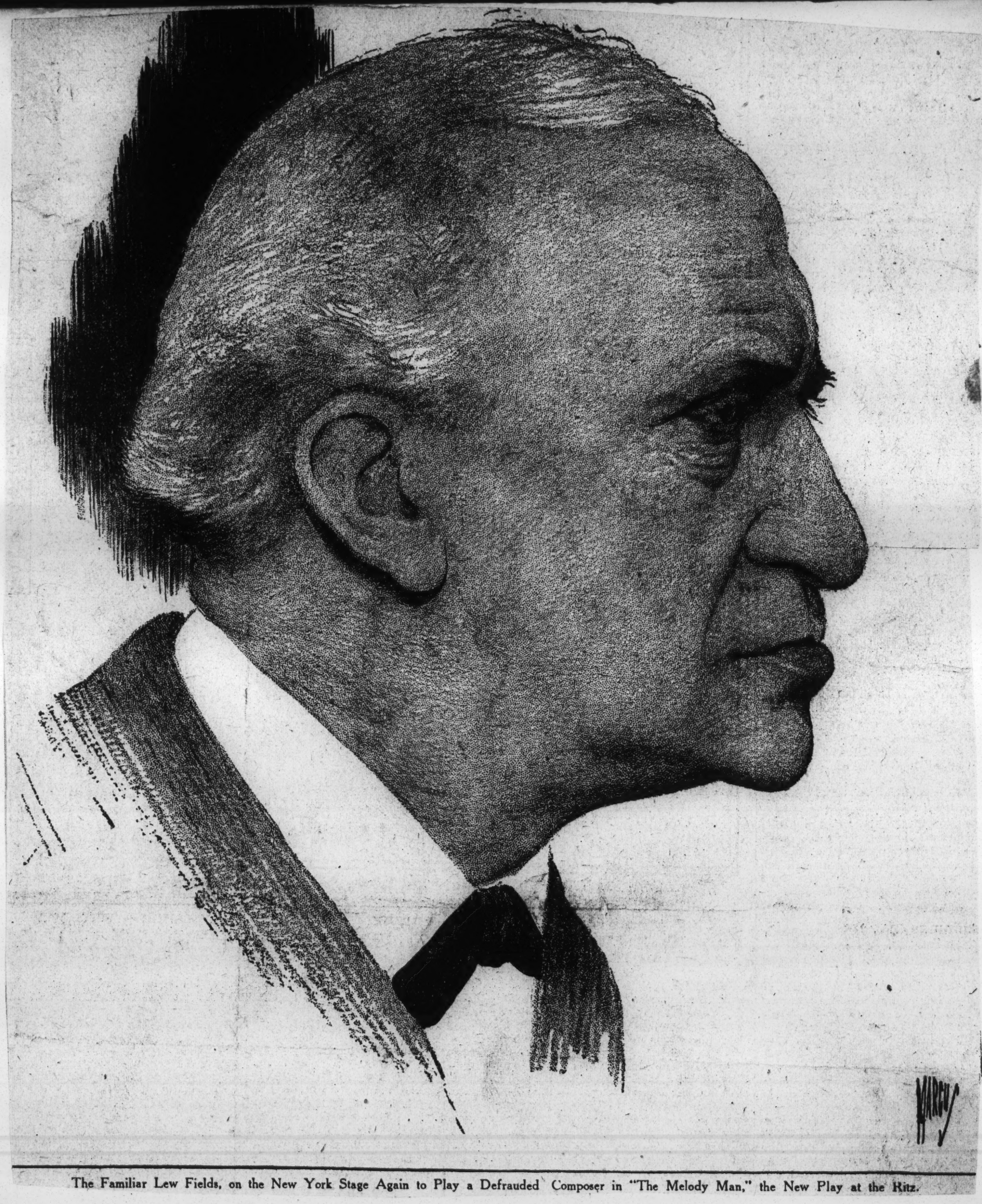
"The Wonderful Visit."

REPORTS of those who saw "The Wonderful Visit" at the Lenox Hill Theatre raised a rather puzzling question. Why was a comedy by H. G. Wells and St. John Ervine, which turned on so imaginative an idea and contained so many telling strokes of timely satire, produced at the Lenox Hill? In part the question is now answered by the fact that the production has somehow managed to live and has made its way to Broadway—but only in part. Doubtless the Princess Theatre will become the resort of devotees avid for so characteristic a product of two current notables; but doubtless also they will be, at least in some slight measure, disappointed.

The blunt fact is that the Angel who makes this wonderful visit is not quite so wonderful as he might be. Some touch of imagination is lacking, of the true celestial fire. He is more like a waif who has wandered in, chill and spiritless, from interstellar vacuity—painfully ignorant of a world which is (or should be) the especial care of good angels, and at the same time curiously unillumined by any ray of light from the region above the stars. When the good folk of Siddermorton refuse to believe in him, one quite understands. Bad begins, but worse remains behind. Instead of bearing a message of might, of healing and regenerative love, this Angel becomes corrupted by worldly passions. One ends by doubting whether Messrs. Wells and Ervine themselves believed in him. Few actors have ever been more deeply afflicted than is Margaret Mower with what wise player-folk know as a false-good part. She talks and gropes and wanders—and that is the end of it.

It is in limning the shallow righteousness and hidebound intelligence of provincial England that Messrs. Wells and Ervine shine. It is not a new theme, but certainly it has never yielded better satire. The downright Lady Hammergallow summarizes the situation in a single sentence. "The fact is," she says, "that we have not been able to—what is the word, 'assimilate'? —I say, STOMACH the Angel."



The Familiar Lew Fields, on the New York Stage Again to Play a Defrauded Composer in "The Melody Man," the New Play at the Ritz.

Theatrical—1924.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

N. Y. EVENING WORLD
FEBRUARY 22, 1924

White Girl Cast as Negro's Wife In Eugene O'Neill's Latest Play

MARY BLAIR FRANCIS BRUGIERE

Miss Mary Blair, Now of Provincetown Players, to Assume Role.

The determinatioin of Eugene O'Neill, Kenneth Macgowan and others to produce at the Provincetown Playhouse Mr. O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," is causing much comment, both favorable and otherwise, by people who are familiar with the details of the plan. The drama, which deals with marriage between Negroes and whites, will have as its leading man Paul Robson, a Negro, while opposite him, in the role of his wife, will be Mary Blair, a white actress of charm and ability.

Speculation as to what white woman would assume the wife role has been rife for several weeks, but this detail was not announced by the producers until Mary E. Fitzpatrick of the Provincetown organization told an Evening World reporter to-day Miss Blair had been selected and had agreed to portray the part.

"Mr. O'Neill had Miss Blair in mind when he wrote the play," said Miss Fitzpatrick. "He has consulted with her several times and she has accepted the role. Paul Robson, the Negro actor, is a man of histrionic ability and a fine gentleman. We expect to open the play at our theatre shortly after March 10."

"Yes," said Miss Blair at her home. "I am to play the role of the Negro's wife. Why shouldn't I? I have consulted with Mr. O'Neill about it several times. Further than that, I do not care to talk. I have promised the management not to consent to interviews until the proper time comes."

"Are you from the South?" she was asked.

"No. Now that's all I can say."

Miss Blair at present is appearing in "Fashion" at the Provincetown Playhouse. She has acted with the Theatre Guild casts several times—most recently in "The Faithful."

A report was abroad in the theatrical district that the Provincetown producers were having a difficult time filling the part of the wife. Helen MacKellar, it said, had been asked to play the role, but had refused. Miss MacKellar, who lives at No. 325 Riverside Drive, was not at home when an effort was made to reach her on the telephone, but George McQuarrie, her husband, denied she had been invited to assume the role.

"It was not offered her," he said. "If it had been, she could not have accepted it, since she is under contract to A. H. Woods. Both Miss MacKellar and I are friends of Mr. O'Neill, however, and are familiar with the play."

"Would she have played the part had it been offered?" he was asked.

"Miss MacKellar would have to answer that question. But, as I said before, it was not tendered her."

It is said the role of the wife requires her to kiss her Negro husband's hand. The story is laid in Manhattan. Eight children—four white and four black—play on the sidewalk. A little blonde white girl likes a little Negro boy and they promise to be sweethearts.

Nine years later the girl has taken up with a white prizefighter—one of the four white children seen previously—and he treats her brutally. The Negro boy is still in the picture and is shown as a mild, kindly young fellow. Finally the white girl marries the Negro. She develops insanity, the story goes, over the race question, as she lives with her husband in the home of his mother and sister.

In the finish he fails to pass his bar examination, and when she finds he is to remain the kindly, simple Negro she always knew, she is childishly happy. It is then she kisses his hand, while he asks God to forgive him for his ambition and asks that he be made worthy of "the child you send me for the woman you take away."

Miss Fitzpatrick says the work of selecting the cast, other than for the roles to be played by Robson and Miss Blair, still is going on.

COMPOSER, SOON TO VISIT TEXAS, HALTS AUTO SHOW IN MINN.

(Chas. M. Tucker A. N. P.)

Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 23—When it was learned and announced that R. Nathaniel Dett, Director of Music at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va., was a guest at the Annual Twin City Automobile Show, the entire program was stopped and other activities ceased in honor of the disguished musician. "Listen to the Lambs," composed by R. Nathaniel Dett and which has met with tremendous success both in America and abroad—being included as the American Number on the program of the Ukranain Chorus of Russia when that organization made a tour of America—was played by Desiune's Famous Band of the Northwest. After the number was rendered, the eight thousand and more visitors showed their appreciation with a tremendous applause to which the composer was forced to acknowledge.

Mr. Dett is now on a concert tour with an itinerary which calls for appearance at Winnipeg, St. Paul, Cleveland, Cincinnati and other points of the Southwest.

He appears in St. Paul under the auspices of Everywoman Progressive Council of which Mrs. W. T. Francis is President.

He will appear in Fort Worth, Texas ,Friday night, February 29th under the auspices of the Colored branch Y. W. C. A.

"Negro Nuances"

NEW YORK, Feb. 14—(By the Associated Negro Press)—"Negro Nuances" is the name of a production that Will Marion Cook has in rehearsal in New York for an opening tentatively mentioned as March 4. The piece is an assembling of the Negro musical history from early Africa's barbarian tunes to the modern day jazz that has been put into a libretto by Abbie Mitchell, the operatic soprano, who will be featured in the production. Will Marion Cook and James R. Johnson, who wrote the melodies for "Running Wild" has composed the music, much of which is based on the Folklore of the slave and reconstruction days.

Fidelity to type is to be the keynote of the unique offering. Mr. Cook is advertising to send anywhere in America for exceptional race talent, and he is very desirous of having it known that he regards with equal favor the octoroon and the absolutely black beauties of the race, and the many varied shades between. He proposes to present a pageant of vocal perfection as well as that of face and form that will disclose the vargated colorful charm of the American Negro.

Marian Cook and Louis Douglas are en route from London to participate in the production.

N. Y. C. WALL STREET JOURNAL
FEBRUARY 26, 1924

A Needless Provocation

It is hoped that wiser second thought will cause the directors of the Provincetown Playhouse to abandon their announced intention of producing next month a play with a negro actor playing the leading part and the opposite character of his sweetheart and wife sustained by a white woman. The hope is inspired by no race prejudice against the negro. On the contrary it is friendliness for the colored people which prompts objection to this absolutely needless provocation of racial feeling. It is an objection which will doubtless be shared by the better class of colored people themselves.

Even as far north as this city there exists an irresistible feeling which will resent the bringing together of a negro and a white woman in the close physical contacts of the stage. There is no use arguing whether that feeling is right or wrong, justifiable or unjustifiable. It is enough that it exists. It is strong enough to presage disorder in case the present intention is carried out.

Messrs. Kenneth Macgowan, Eugene O'Neill and Robert Edmond Jones, the directors in question, pose as the apostles of an art higher than that of the theatre as we know it. Their pose may be correct in some cases. To claim that art requires in the proposed play with a white cast that an actual negro is a necessity for the leading part is too absurd to fool any one. If "notoriety" were substituted for "art" the claim might pass. It would be as reasonable to insist that in "Othello" only a Moor could play the title role, that in "Hamlet" none but a Dane could be the hero and that *Shylock* should always be impersonated by a Jew. If Mr. O'Neill's play has the technical merit and a white man were cast for the lead, it would not be necessary for a competent actor even to accent his negro make-up. It certainly wouldn't be necessary for him to black up all over as once happened with an overconscientious aspirant to the role of *Othello*.

There is not even the excuse that this is the only way that a great but oppressed negro actor can secure a hearing before the white public. The obscure colored man announced for the part will doubtless be coached into a satisfactory performance by his artistic discoverers and sponsors who will afterwards beat the usual tom-toms in his behalf to show their acumen in rescuing another colored Booth or Macready from oblivion.

The trouble with dramatic art as advocated by these gentlemen is that they seem to believe that art to be art must always carry some kind of a taint. If they can get enough others to share their belief there is likely to be profit in their enterprises. Of course there are also responsibilities and consequences to be faced. It has always been an open secret in the theatre that profanity, obscenity and indecency would interest audiences, but until lately they have not been considered legitimate attractions on the American stage. There seems to be just now a slight reaction in the public mind which may make this an unfavorable time to present a depiction of miscegenation. This may have affected Miss Helen MacKellar, who is said to have declined the woman's part when she learned that she would have to play opposite a negro. Apparently Miss Mary Blair has no fear of its effects on her future career, as it is announced that she has accepted the part with full knowledge of what is required of her.

It may be that there is no real intention to cast a negro for the part and that the talk is only advertising propaganda to direct attention to the play. This would be hardly consistent with claims to only the highest artistic intent, but it is to be hoped that it is true. If not, the police are competent to deal with any consequent disorder, and with those who incite or engage in it, although the police could hardly be expected to be overenthusiastic in protecting the theatre from which started that triumphant march of "The God of Vengeance" which ended in the criminal courts.

THE DRAMA RETURNS HERE

Olden Outstanding Figure in Lafayette Play

Patrons Would Find Much to Enjoy in "The Wicked House of David" Appearing This Week

If the current week should pass and the management of the Lafayette Theatre forced to report bad business, then none need hesitate in saying that the drama is indeed a thing of the past in Harlem. Mr. Robert Levy, who introduced the drama on a large scale here, should know what "the people" desire along dramatic lines and if "The Wicked House of David" had been produced here at the time he was doing well with these kind of shows the present offering would be playing to standing room.

Mr. Levy selected a mighty good play and we are hoping that it cannot be said at the end of the week that the drama passed out when he did at the Lafayette. Those who will remember reading the disclosures made not so very long ago in the newspapers about the workings of the "House of David" at Benton Harbor will find the true disclosures that brought down the wrath of the authorities on "The Master" and his cohorts in this religious sect, which, like many others of its kind, can always find dupes who are not satisfied with that religion handed down to us from the ages.

Although telling a powerful story of the rascals who, under the guise of religion, sought only to swell their coffers with gold and in the meantime leading astray the innocent young creatures, the play teems with comedy which would satisfy the most exacting along this line. Charlie Olden, who is well known for the splendid work he did in this form of entertainment in its early days here, is the outstanding artist and his work is of a high calibre.

"The Master" as played by Dan Edwards is also well done and we would just as soon see the name of this gentleman in large type on the program as he is deserving of anything good we can say of him. Miss Marie Young is also splendid. In fact, we can say that all those appearing in the cast did remarkably well and are deserving of the support of our people. Ida Anderson as Helen Drake fits nicely into a part which few can surpass her playing as she has about everything that go to make such a character successful.

We dare to hope that the showing of this play at the Lafayette Theatre will be the fore-runner of the success which should meet the other dramatic plays coming into the house commencing next week. The fact that Mr. O'Neil gained widespread publicity through his "Emperor Jones" with Charlie Gilpin did much to attract the attention of our people, considering that the white newspapers placed their touch of approval on his first big effort and in this day and time a few lines in the dailies acts like magic on the brother and his sister. Some will say we are mistaken, but the good Lord knows that there is something like the voice of "massa boss" speaking on the old plantation when these papers deign to notice us.

Ethiopian Art Theatre Co. Coming to Harlem

Noted Producers to Offer Some of Their Latest Dramas at Popular 7th Ave. House

The Ethiopian Art Theatre Company, the most famous of all racial dramatic organizations is opening a remarkable season of plays at the Lafayette Theatre March 3.

Miller and Lyles, C. G. Washington, Willis Richardson and many other famous racial writers have contributed plays which this company will feature. Comedies and tragedies and plays which have a mixture of both will feature this company's bills.

The opening play, "The Gold Front Stores," is one of the funniest farce comedies ever written. It tells the story of a storekeeper in a small southern town who has a "nice, comfortable, little store" called the "Dimity Store and Restaurant" which is modernized and systematized by a brisk, hustling young man from the north.

A handsome young manicure and a faithful loving cook get all mixed up with the storekeeper and his new manager. Through more than two hours the story runs through tears and side splitting laughs until it ends in a burlesque performance of "Othello" and a double wedding in which all four take part.

One of the most notable casts ever gathered by a racial company has been assembled for this production. Abbie Mitchell plays the part of the cook and Edna Thomas is the manicure. J. "Happy" Holmes and Gus Smith play the parts of storekeeper and manager. Dora Dean, famous as a vaudeville artist, and Thomas Brooks a star of musical comedy are cast in comedy roles while Richard Harrison, Jack Carter, Arthur Payne, Reginald Holt, Velma Richardson and others have important roles.

This company which became famous last year through its productions of Shakespeare and "Salome" on Broadway is carrying with it scenery as elaborate and beautiful as marked its productions last season. A stage orchestra and singers for the double wedding scene are being used in the first play.

Theatrical—1924.
Individual Troupes, etc.

Play With Spirituals Novelty For New York

"Roseanne," Written by One Southern Girl, Produced by Another, Arouses Enthusiasm at Greenwich-Village Theater—Playwright Visitor Here.

By Jean Adger Flinn.

Special to The State.

New York, January 26.—Signal success has rewarded Nan Bagby Stephens of Atlanta, Ga., whose play with spirituals, "Roseanne," is now being presented at the Greenwich Village theater by Mary H. Kirkpatrick of Birmingham, Ala. Both playwriters and producer are graduates of Agnes Scott institute, Decatur, Ga., and on the opening night of the play they received an exquisite basket of flowers as a tribute from the students of this Southern college.

In the first night audience were many Southerners, among others C. P. Greneker of Newberry, S. C., who is well known in the theater world as general press representative of Lee and J. J. Schubert. Following Miss Stephens' graceful speech, made at the close of the last act, in reponse to the insistent applause and calls for "Author! Author!" there was an informal reception "back stage." It was like the gathering of the clan, all eager to offer congratulations and best wishes to the gifted playwright.

The enthusiastic reviews given "Roseanne" by all the leading dramatic critics of New York stamped the seal of prophesied success on this unique Southern play. With insight and understanding Miss Stephens portrays the negro characters, just as she has known them in the South, and her work is regarded as a vital contribution to the American theater.

Miss Stephens, who is now a guest at the Stratford House on Thirty-second street, is well known in South Carolina as vice president of the National Federation of Music Clubs.

"Yes, indeed, I have been in Charleston and know a number of charming Charleston people," she replied smiling in answer to her Southern interviewer's query. "And I have a number of friends in Columbia. I visited Mrs. Cora Cox Lucas there not long ago, when I met Mrs Robert W. Gibbes and other members of the Music club.

"You know how intensely interested I am in the federation and I am still devoting a great deal of my time to music. After leaving college I went abroad to study in Vienna with Leschetisky. I have composed two operettas. One was produced in Atlanta by the Atlanta Art association and I've written about 25 songs. A number of these have been published.

"When did I first think of writing plays? That would be hard to answer, but I believe Mary Kirkpatrick and I both received our earliest inspiration from Miss McKinny, head of the English department at Agnes Scott. "Roseanne" was written first as a two act play and later revised. It had been read by a number of other managers and I was given some encouragement, but I know I owe my success to Mary Kirkpatrick's courage and generous support.

"During the last eight years Miss Kirkpatrick has presented a number of successful plays, 'Nice People,' 'He and She,' 39 East, 'Mary II' and 'The Little Journey,' among others. Her keen judgement and understanding of the theater and the public have won for her recognition among the leading producers. We are fortunate in having Frances French of Boston as our competent company manager. Miss French, by the way, has the distinction of being the only woman company manager in New York City."

Realizing that it is no easy matter for any one brought up north of the Mason and Dixon line to imitate the negro dialect, Miss Kirkpatrick succeeded in filling her cast with Southerners. The title role, however, was given to Chrystal Here, for only an actress of Miss Herne's distinctive caliber and rich personality could interpret adequately the character of the negro heroine. And in this part Miss Herne gives a superb performance, finely shaded and colorful throughout. Admirable support is given Miss Herne by Katherine Comegys as Leola and John Harrington as Cicero Brown.

Southern members of the company are: Blaine Cordner, Jacksonville; Kathleen Comegys, Virginia; Murray Bennett, Alabama; John Harrington, Georgia; Marie Taylor, Texas; Tracy L'Engle, Kentucky; Irma Caldwell, Tennessee; Robert Straruss, Virginia; Leslie M. Hunt, Georgia; Grace Stephens, Georgia; Rosa Powell, Virginia; Emma Gadsden, Alabama; Sterling Holloway, Georgia; Chappell Corey, Jr., Alabama; Grover Burgess, North Carolina; Brown Bates, Alabama.

The story of the play tells how the idolized negro minister turns out to be the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing, wrecking the life of Leola, Roseanne's little sister. Rather a threadbare theme that ravels a bit in the last act, but the settings are well chosen to give an intimate picture of the negro's everyday life and characteristic emotional hero-worship.

The most dramatic scene in the play shows the gathering of the colored congregation in Mt. Zion church, Atlanta, when Miss Stephens introduced the singing of some haunting spirituals with telling effect. Just as the minister has succeeded in rousing the "bretherin" and sisterin" to an hysterical state of religious frenzy, Roseanne enters, the very embodiment of the passionate spirit of vengeance. Denouncing the betrayer of the dead girl she drives him from the pulpit and goads the startled congregation to sound the alarm and start out in pursuit. In the last act the terrified culprit comes again to Roseanne's cabin, pleading protection. Roseanne, softened by the sight of his suffering, hides him from the men who have tracked him with bloodhounds and by helping him escape proves the power of forgiveness.

It is the singing of the spirituals by the Southerners, all familiar with negro music and the spirit of negro revivals, that stirs the audience to greatest enthusiasm.

"Lawd a mussy, chile," somebody in the theater lobby exclaimed the other evening, "if dat dar singin's jes' had 'er kep' up, ebrybody would'er done got religin right—'sho 'ting. Do tell! Come back and git conv—"

SISSLE AND BLAKE'S SHOW TO BE "SHUFFLES OF 1924"

"Shuffle Along" will give way to Sissle & Blake's "Shuffles of 1924." We are permitted to pass this word to you by the management which will close the present season at Providence, R. I., Jan. 26th. "Bandana Days" has been dropped from consideration as a title for the new Sissle & Blake show, the book of which is now receiving more or less finishing touches from these two eminent entertainers, and the decision brings with it a determination to capitalize the popularity of "Shuffle Along."

After four weeks of rehearsing in Philadelphia, the show will open about Feb. 26, with four comedians, thirty dancing girls, twenty stepping boys and a singing chorus of forty; twelve principals and an orchestra of twenty-two pieces and a jazz band.. Over one hundred people will be on the stage being the largest Negro show ever gotten together. Ned Waburn is to stage the production which will be backed by Whitney and Erlanger.

PROVINCETOWN PRODUCTION WILL HAVE FIRST MIXED CAST

A white leading lady and a colored leading man—that is the interesting and novel cast that will interpret Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chilluns Got Wings," soon to be produced at the Provincetown Playhouse.

The new piece by O'Neill, who with Robert Edmond Jones and Kenneth Macgowan direct the destinies of the little Greenwich Village playhouse, is said to be a realistic study of the race problem. It tells of a white girl and one of our group who grow up together and become married, and of their experiences abroad and in the home of the husband's mother.

The actor for the male role has already beene chosen, it was admitted this week, but his name was not revealed. Kenneth Macgowan said it was not Charles Gilpin, who starred in Eugene O'Neill's other play about negroes, "The Emperor Jones." The female lead is yet to be selected and so is the rest of the cast.

The new production will be the third at the Provincetown Playhouse since it was taken over by the triumvirate. They first did Strindberg's "The Spook Sonata" and this week presented a revival of the old play, "Fashion."—Zit's Weekly.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
FEBRUARY 24, 1924

NEGROES PROTEST NEW O'NEILL PLAY

Boston Will Ban "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as Insulting Colored Race.

U. S ATTORNEY WILL ACT

Gets Promise of Censor Casey to Forbid Production as Indignation Rises.

(Special Dispatch to The Morning Telegraph.)

BOSTON, Feb. 23.

Boston's negroes will resent the presentation in New England of Eugene O'Neill's propaganda of miscegenation, "All God's Chilluns Got Wings."

The smashing denunciation of this putrid effort to build up sympathy for a negro married to a white woman has come, not from the whites of Boston, but from the negroes who resent even more bitterly than the whites the sinister message carried by O'Neill's play.

Former United States District Attorney William H. Lewis, one of the most noted and notable colored lawyers in the East, has been engaged by a committee of Boston's most prominent citizens, headed by the leading negroes in the city, and instructed to bar the play, not from Boston, but from all New England.

Arrest to Face Players.

This can and will be done, Mr. Lewis asserted last night, and if any bootleg attempt is made to produce the play in the New England States every member of the cast, black, white and mixed will be arrested.

Boston is aroused to the highest pitch of indignation by reading the play as it appears in one of the radical monthlies printed in New York and by the news from New York that Mary Blair, a white woman, who has appeared in performances of the Provincetown Theatre in New York, is to take the part of the negro's wife and to present the spectacle upon the stage of a white woman kissing and slobbering over a negro's hand.

Miscegenation is no more popular in Boston than in Georgia and this attempt at revolting sensationalism has received the condemnation of every resident of Boston, black or white, who has been consulted.

Not only is the idea of the mixed cast, in which the white woman playing the lead is indicated as being about to become the mother of a child born to the negro, a thing that has aroused every instinct of abhorrence in this city, but the whole trend of the play is condemned by blacks and whites alike.

Ban Already Promised.

Former United States District Attorney Lewis said to-night:

"The production will not be allowed here in Boston. That is certain. I have the promise of City Censor Casey, acting for Mayor Curley, and that is sufficient so far as Boston is concerned. If any attempt is made to produce the play in any other part of New England, you may be sure that we will block it, and block it effectually. You may say that it will not be permitted in any State of New England. Every negro in New England will engage in this battle against this insidious effort at propaganda that insults the intelligence and self-respect of every negro in this country."

City Censor Casey said to-night that the play would be barred in this city because of the great mass of protests received.

"We have no desire to create ill feeling or belittle any race in Boston, much less to instigate race controversy or possible war. I wired Mayor Curley regarding the matter, and his opinion concurs with mine."

The revolt, started in Boston, is spreading to every part of New England and the negroes everywhere in this section will join with those of Boston and fight this play of O'Neill's to the finish. From

what can be learned of the agitation in Boston to-night, there is no chance that the play will ever be seen in any theatre in any one of the New England States.

This massed revolt against the latest and most notorious of the freak results of the establishment of the nut theatre in Macdougal street in New York comes, it is to be noted, not from the whites, but from the negroes O'Neill has tried to conciliate.

Not only are his ideas not accepted by the very negroes he has slobbered over and made a part of his perverted sentimentality, but this revolt is born in the very State in which the Provincetown Players first had their being. From Provincetown itself, it is learned to-night, that the resentment and anger aroused there may prevent the little group of radicals who first started their project there from ever returning to the little Cape Cod village.

NEW YORK CITY HERALD
FEBRUARY 23, 1924

FOR O'NEILL PLAY

Mary Blair.

MARY BLAIR TO APPEAR OPPOSITE NEGRO ACTOR

Will Play Ella in 'All God's Chillun Got Wings.'

Confirmation was obtained from the management at the Provincetown Playhouse last night of the report that Mary Blair, an actress now appearing in "Fashion" at that theater, would play the leading feminine role, that of a white girl who marries a negro in the latest Eugene O'Neill drama, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," soon to be presented there. Opposite her will play Paul Robson, a negro actor.

It was said that O'Neill had Miss Blair in mind when he wrote the part and that it had not been offered to any other actress. It was reported a couple of weeks ago that the role had been suggested to Helen MacKellar, and that she had agreed to play it on proviso that the negro role be taken by a white actor blacked up. When she was told that a real negro was to portray this member of his race Miss MacKellar withdrew, according to the story.

Miss Blair said she considered it an honor to be selected for this O'Neill play. She holds there is nothing in the part, in which she lives in the negro's home and kisses his hand, to offend any woman desiring to portray life, and to portray it decently. She regards the role of *Ella*, who is the sweetheart of the little colored boy, *Jim*, from his earliest days, in the light of art only.

Kenneth MacGowan, co-director of the organization with O'Neill and Robert Edmond Jones, added that the play is a work of art, and that art knows no racial basis. He said an official statement on the cast will soon be issued. The play, he points out, may be read in the February issue of the *New Mercury* and that those who don't like it need not come to see it.

A NEW PLAY OF RACIAL LIFE

"ROSE ANNIE"

(By J. A. Jackson, of the Billboard.)

New York, Jan. 24—(For the Associated Negro Press).—At the Greenwich Village Theater in New York Mary H. Kirkpatrick has presented "Rose Anne," a play with all Negro characters, played by white actors, from the pen of Nan Bagby Stephens. The writer and his party were there at the invitation of those interested in the future of the production. In order that a proper premise may be established for our comment, it is quite proper to mention whatever fitness we may have for the task.

The reactions set forth are based upon the very definite knowledge that Friend Wife has of small Kentucky town conditions, because she was born and reared in one. Another lady in the party is vested with a similar authority by virtue of the early days spent in a town not far from the nation's capital. The writer has, though Northern born of a family that has been Yankee since 1793, has travelled extensively in the South, been in every Dixie state and knows his people there.

1-26-24

Under our immediate observation was a colored theatrical editor who was born in Missouri and his publisher a native of Florida, and our first interview after leaving the performance was with a nationally known Negro welfare official whose early days were spent in Carolina and who has just returned from a stay in Georgia towns.

Now for the results: "Rose Anne" is the most confusing thing in the way of drama we have ever witnessed. It is positively paradoxical.

Just About Perfection.

The writer has a most intimate knowledge of the Negro; and the producing authorities have attained just about perfection in the matter of little details that create the atmosphere and stamp it as a most accurate picturization of Negro life in a small town.

The story, a logical and gripping one, is a very bitter demonstration of what the race has suffered from the parasitic plowhand preacher ever since the days of reconstruction. It tells of misplaced confidence on the part of Rose Anne and her neighbors in the rectitude of a parson who turns out to be the "wolf in sheeps clothes." It is well told of a condition that has been only too familiar to us.

It's duplication is hardly possible today, because of the very thorough organization of the colored denominations in two conferences, and because of the long process of education required for the ministry which would very naturally eliminate a great many of such propensities.

A church scene that evokes considerable amusement from white patrons and commands respect for its fidelity from the colored ones might well be altered so as to avoid the sacrilege involved in presenting a sermon. A song service could be substituted and the drastic effects obtained without this onslaught upon the one ideal that has been a mainstay to a people who have had little else upon which their punished souls might cling. The noisy assembling of the congregation is ALL WRONG. Church is the one place that the race does not make a noise, except in reverence.

To the authors' credit may it be said that every one of the 25 characters are true and each faithfully represents a well known type. The whole group is a sad arraignment of a lack of education that makes it possible for a mountebank to assume such importance in the life of any community.

Types Are Accurate.

Except as to speech, the types are most accurately delineated. This is especially true of the women. Chrystal Hearne in the title role is magnificent; her mulatto makeup is an achievement. The same may be said for Kathleen Comegys as Leola. Both are genuine actresses. They have exceptional emotional appreciation of their parts.

Their dialect, however, is not the dialect of the Southern colored person, although it represents a remarkable effort to accomplish it. The other characters are not so successful, albeit the minister has been provided with phrases and direction in mannerisms that invest his part with a sense of realism. The piece proves that white persons under cork can no more be a Negro than can a colored person bleached and treated with Kink-No-More be white.

The last act is, from our point of view, anti-climatic. It appears to give Negro sanction to the lynching habit. This is quite at variance with the temper and the tendencies of the race. Besides, the white folks in no Southern community in the land would permit Negroes to conduct a manhunt with rope in hand.

Make the suggested changes and the piece would be an immense draw for a long time in colored theaters, and it would sell itself by word of mouth recommendations to white audiences. Eliminate the last act and an epic of one part of American life will have been written.

With no disrespect to Miss Hearne and her associates, we should like to see Evelyn Preer of Ethiopian art fame in the title role, with Evelyn Ellis doing "Leola," and Solomon Bruce, Sidney Kirkpatrick, or Charles Gilpin doing the minister. Laura Bowman as "Sister Tempy Snow." Let Clarence Muse or Arthur Porter do the convert to religion and have the Elkins Folksong Singers make up the congregation, and, ye gods! no audience could withstand the appeal.

"SHUFFLE ALONG" DRAWS BIG CROWD TO "81 THEATER"

Atlanta theatergoers Friday night delved into a brand-new form of amusement—and found it refreshingly unlike the usual run of shows.

The event was the appearance of "Shuffle Along," famous negro musical comedy, and the place was the 81 Theater on Decatur street, temporarily converted into an amusement house for whites.

The audience was one of those affairs commonly described as "packed," and it was an extremely interested one. "Shuffle Along" was thoroughly enjoyed; the cast of negro actors apparently stretched its ability to provide diversion, and the chorus of dusky females danced with an abandon that was a revelation to those accustomed to chorus of white road shows, which, probably through force of habit, eventually move like automatons.

The surprising feature about "Shuffle Along" was the precision and smoothness with which it moved. The fact is that precision doesn't exactly fit the case, though it is a stock word in theater criticisms. The colored performers pushed the situations in "Shuffle Along" with such verve and dash that at times the action was bewildering in its rapidity.

The show is a musical comedy. What plot it boasts evolves about a three-cornered race for the mayoralty of Jimtown, two of the candidates being partners in business who are consistently robbing and maligning each other, and the third is that rara avis of politics—an honest man. The girl, daughter of the village hotel keeper, is promised as a bride to the winner—and, naturally, in the long run, the honest but bunglesome "hero" wins.

3-1-24

Real, keen humor lights up the piece frequently; the singing, particularly by the two principals, is good; the dancing of the chorus, as aforementioned, is peppy and zazzy "to a fare-you-well," to borrow a bit of descriptive dialect from Jimtown.

Prime favorites among the songs were "Simply Full of Jazz," "Bandana Days," "Honeysuckle Time," "Sing Me to Sleep," "Der Mammy," "If You Haven't Been Vamped by a Brownskin, You Haven't Been Vamped at All," "I Am Craving for that Kind of Love," "I Cried for You."

The show proved to be clean of line as well as action, and the most discriminating onlooker could not conveniently have taken offense at any feature associated with it. Altogether it was a distinct tribute to the art of the negro and probably went far to pave the way to future popularity of such offerings in Atlanta.

Theatrical — 1924
Individual Troupes, etc.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
JANUARY 31, 1924

"Rose-Anne" Is Closing.

Mary Kirkpatrick has decided to terminate the career of "Rose-Anne," her play of negro life, on Saturday night at the Punch & Judy Theatre.

It opened a month ago down at the Greenwich Village, being forced uptown after a fortnight in Sherican Square by the advent of "The Gift."

By way of retributive justice, the latter drama was closed this week to let "Rust" in there, this evening.

"All God's Chillun Got Wings"

By Wm. Pickens.

Those who own this play have put out a lot of well-worded propaganda in favor of it. They have tried to forestall criticism of the thing by saying that it was all "for art's sake."

The very nature of this play is to create sentiment against mixed schools of white and black, especially in the North where the common school has been so far maintained. The play shows that a little white girl and a little black boy, BECAUSE THEY CAME IN CONTACT IN THE SAME PUBLIC SCHOOL, fell in love with each other; that this love lasted into later years over many vicisitudes; that they married, even when the girl was not fit to marry; and that it all TURNED OUT BAD, Terrible!

At present the most actively growing sentiment in the North is one against the mixed school. "If a black boy and a white boy attend the same schools and get the same education," said one fellow naively in Springfield, Ohio, "they will want the Same things."

That is the very best reason, of course, for sending all the children to the same school, but in the eyes of a race prejudice, it becomes the source of the strongest sentiment against sending the PROSCRIBED RACE to the school with the "chosen." That is plain, and that is logical. But while that is the natural side of the matter for American race prejudice to take, it would be a foolish side for the American Negro. It is to the Negro's interest that the black child should have the same ambitions and the same chances that other Americans have. No segregated system will preserve this equality or foster it. To put you out is to put you under. OUT and UNDER are convertible terms in this case.

Play Aimed At Mixed Schools

"All God's Chillun Got Wings," whether it was so intended or not, is fuel for this growing and bad sentiment against mixed schools in the North. And nobody has yet convinced us that it was not so intended. This play is dangerous to the democracy of the Northern public schools,—such democracy as they still have,—some of them.

While the play, indirectly supports the South, it would hardly be allowed in the South, for the South is so silly that it cannot stand to SEE a black man and a white woman in love even in a play or in a picture. And this play is not needed by the prejudice of the South: segregated schools, with all their hellish robbery, already exist there. But it is in the North that this play will do "good," from the Ku Klux point of view.

And if the owners of this thing have not yet found it out, we want to inform them that the Ku Klux would pay to have just such a play as this put on. Some colored people in it? O, that's nothing. Colored people are no better than white people. You can hire SOME of them to do anything that the law allows, if you have money enough. And the law certainly does not make it an offense for a colored man or woman to reflect on their race in plays,—or to help the Ku Klux in any other way.

Yes—"All God's chillun got wings"—but remember also: "Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't goin there!"

NEW YORK CITY WORLD
MARCH 4, 1924

SOME NEGROES SAY 'ALL GOD'S CHILLUN' IS PLAY FROM LIFE

Prominent Men of Race Hail Production as an Interesting Study of Existing Conditions.

REHEARSALS PROCEED, SAYS MISS FITZGERALD.

Paul Robeson and Mary Blair to Keep Roles—Cleveland Allen Calls It Injustice to Negro.

Objections were made further manifest yesterday to the production of Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," to be produced by the Provincetown Players this month, in which a white girl marries a Negro.

Not only did whites make known their disapproval of the production, but some Negroes complained that it was a misrepresentation and ought not to be permitted.

Nevertheless, Eleanor Fitzgerald, manager of the Provincetown Players, Inc., declared the play surely would have its premiere. Rehearsals were proceeding, she said, with Paul Robeson playing the part of the Negro, and Mary Blair, now appearing in "Fashion," as his leading woman. No change will be made in the play, she said, or the scene in which the white wife kisses the Negro's hand.

"Mass of Contradictions."

Cleveland G. Allen, Negro publicist, expressed opinion that the play misrepresents the social behavior and ambitions of the educated Negro and "is a mass of contradictions." It is designed, he said, to prevent intermarriage.

"The play does a grave injustice to the Negro," said Allen, "and should not be produced at the expense of a whole race. The Negroes who are to play in such a drama are not helping their race and are not making any contribution to their histrionic ability. The Negro has been placed in the wrong atmosphere in this play."

On the other hand, Negroes prominent in the business and professional life of the race here said the play ought, by all means, to be produced, not merely as art, but because they considered it portrayed a true picture of a certain existing situation.

"Very Interesting Study."

Dr. Louis T. Wright, a Harvard graduate, of No. 218 West 139th Street, said: "It will make a very interesting study and will help educate people to the fact that intermarriage does take place." E. O. Austin, a Negro lawyer, of No. 22 Broadway, said that "in art color makes no difference."

George W. Harris, Negro editor of the New York News, said: "If the play is to portray living situations, then we must some day expect to see this situation portrayed; intermixture and intermarriage cannot be legislated out of existence."

John E. Nail, a Negro real estate operator, of No. 145 West 135th Street, called the play "timely, in that it presents an actual situation with which too many people are unfamiliar."

PUBLIC PROTEST AGAINST PLAY

TO BE IGNORED

In spite of a rising tide of indignation against the proposed play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," Eugene O'Neill has indicated his intention to ignore the protests he has received, and proceed with the play, according to the New York World.

The World continues:

The Provincetown Players, Inc., which will produce the play this month in the Provincetown Playhouse, Macdougal Street, Greenwich Village, also has received many letters of indignant disapproval. It has received some of approval.

The play deals with the tragic love of a Negro man and a white woman. Paul Robeson, full-blooded Negro, who won a Phi Beta Kappa key at Rutgers College, a law degree from Columbia University and a place on one of Walter Camp's All-America football teams, is to play the role of the Negro. Mary Blair, a white actress now playing in "Fashion," also produced by the Provincetown Players, will take the leading woman's part. Negroes and whites will take other parts on the play.

A half dozen rehearsals of the play have been conducted. There has been no change in the manuscript since it was published in a monthly magazine. That shows the "business" of the play calls for the white woman to fall on her knees at the feet of her Negro husband and later to kiss his hand. Mrs. M. Eleanor Fitzgerald, manager of the organization, said yesterday there was no difficulty in obtaining the cast, and none in rehearsals. Miss Blair was the first actress offered the role. She accepted.

"We see no basis for the aroused of any racial prejudice," Mrs. Fitzgerald said. "We are producing the play because it is beautiful. There has never been any question on our part about producing it. Some people may storm our doors, but if they wait to see the play they will go away humble."

Eugene O'Neill, the outhor, said over the telephone from his home, in Ridgefield, Conn., yesterday, he could see no reason for any opposition to the play on racial grounds.

"The racial factor is incidental," he said. "The play is a character study of two human beings. Mr. Robeson is a fine actor. He played opposite Mrs. Patrick Campbell in England. I understand she is a white woman."

No matter how convinced they may be that the play may stir antagonisms, public officials are powerless to prevent its productioon, it was said yesterday. The playhouses is an unlicensed theatre, operated under the device of a club for amusement of its annually subscribing members.

Joab H. Banton, District Attorney of New York County, said the statues limit his office to the prosecution of producers of "obscene and indecent" plays. He cannot act in any circumstances until after the first production of such plays.

William McAdoo, Chief Magistrate, expressed the opinion that a play in which any physical demonstration of affection is shown between a Negro man and a white woman will result in dangerous racial disorders.

"I should think that in a country where racial prejudice is so deep-seated any play of such character as is described might prove very dangerous."

The police can only take action against the play after its first performance if any disorders ensue, he said. Then it might be stopped as a menace to the peace.

Inciting Race Feeling.

The New York World reports "a rising tide of indignation against the presentation" in New York of "All God's Chillun Got Wings," to which The State referred editorially yesterday.

In spite of the declaration by the author that the "racial factor is incidental," Evidently there was a disposition in official New York to prevent the production by the Provincetown Players, Incorporated, of a play in which a white woman appears as a negro's wife, kneels before him in one part, and kisses his hand in another, but it appears this can not be done. The World explaining: "No matter how convinced they may be that the play may stir antagonisms, public officials are powerless to prevent its production, it was said yesterday. The playhouse is an unlicensed theater, operated under the device of a club for amusement of its annually subscribing members. Joab H. Banton, District Attorney of New York County, said the statutes limit his office to the prosecution of producers of 'obscene and indecent' plays. He can not act in any circumstances until after the first production of such plays."

"I should think," said William McAdoo, chief magistrate, "that in a country where racial prejudice is so deeply seated any play of such character as this is described might prove very dangerous." But the police would be unable to interfere unless upon its production disorders occurred; then it could be stopped "as a menace to the peace."

The negro in the end will be forced to bear the brunt of this stirring of race antagonism for which stupid whites are responsible.

"Othello" and O'Neill's Negro Play.

There seems to be, even in the United States, which has several of the largest "Negro" cities in the world, considerable confusion as to what is and is not a "Negro." Also a very large and perilous amount of confused talk as to what possible ill effects might follow the staging of the disgusting theme of miscegenation.

Even O'Neill, author of the Negro play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," takes the ground that the sole question of its performance is whether or not it is a good play. The better the play the worse it may be as an experiment in social and race explosives.

The British, while we were discussing the matter, have barred even prize-fights between men of different races, in order to avoid possible race prejudice and resentment. This is a prudent step, and is wihtout reflection upon either race. In this country certain elements seem to think that the more abhorrent a race problem is the more it should be aired and staged.

But the general melee of discussion has inspired a remarkable outburst in a quarter from which one least expected it. "F. P. A.," writing his weekly "Diary of Our Own Samuel Pepys"—in his "Conning Tower" of the New York World—gives this delightful morceau:

> Up in season, and so to the office, and read about how there is to be objection to Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," for that in the play a Negro kisses the hand of a white woman, and I deem such objection foolish. Lord, if it be a good play, let it run free; whereas if it be not, and when I read it it seemed dull to me, it will make no great stir. What would the Klan and such people have done about "Othello"?

This passage is packed full of meat—"dark meat." It is not the Negro that kisses the hand of the white woman in O'Neill's absurd drama, but the white woman kisses the hand of the Negro. There is rather a considerable difference. "F. P. A." is, however, right in thinking the play "dull." It is that, and worse.

But how about his view of "Othello" as a Negro! The Moor of Venice was "a dark man," the sort that is reputed to be fatal with large numbers of women; but he was no more of a "Negro" than was Hannibal or Muhammad or Ramses. Yet a real Negro in America made himself famous by exclaiming: "Hannibal was a Nigger and he made Rome howl!"

And "F. P. A." thinks that "Othello," on the American stage, ought to make the Ku-Klux Klansmen "howl"!

COLUMBIA S. C. 5
FEB 10 1924
Record

Nan B. Stephens' Play, "Roseanne," Is True to South and Negro Life

"Don't write away from home," he told me. 'There is too much real drama here in the South. Remember also that words of one sylable are much better than words of two.'"

The original artistic interests of Miss Stephens, however, were not directly toward literature but toward music, in which field she has already done much.

The following account of Nan Stephen's play and her ideas about the southern negro as play material is reprinted from the New York Tribune, because Miss Stephens is well known to many people of Columbia, and because she has some interesting things to say about it. She has been identified for a long time with the work of the Federated Music Clubs and has several times been a visitor here as the guest of Mrs. Cora Cox Lucas.

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The literature having to do with the colored folk of these United States has been written only in part. What there is of real tragedy in their nature has been merely suggested; that which is fundamental and pervasively human has scarcely been inferred. For the sake of humor and sentimentality almost all else has been neglected. Thomas Nelson Page, Ruth McEnery Stuart, F. Hopkinson Smith and several other writers have, indeed, so consistently presented a sentimentalized humorous negro that there is real danger of the type becoming crystalized.

But the negro is no such limited being; to give such an impression is to do injustice to an entire race. Fortunately, however, a few recent writers have begun to concern themselves with his real nature. "The Dreamy Kid," by Eugene O'Neill, and several other one-act plays disclose authentic bits of the colored man's real spirit, while Culbertson's noteworthy "Goat Alley" presents a sustained many-sided study of his intrinsic nature.

It was primarily this desire to present the whole truth which led Nan Bagby Stephens to write "Roseanne." Though this play is not intended as special pleading, it represents the combined work of many fine men and women who are eager to asservate the merits of our colored citizens; to justify their ways, and to further their cultural and spiritual growth.

The author, a quiet though intense Southern woman, has consciously and unconsciously studied the negro all her life, and the producer, Mary Kirkpatrick, has done the same.

"Every member of the cast," says Miss Stephens, "is now playing his part because he holds a real affection for some old darkey mammy. The best blood of the South is represented in 'Roseanne,' and though I cannot disclose the real names, they stand for the best traditions of the South. Most of these players had their own darkey mammies who carried them in arms to just such religious services as take place in the play. My earliest recollections are of negro services, for my own [illegible] took me to her church when I was a little child. Thus, all of us learned very early the tragedy and pathos, the deep, simple, elemental faith that is theirs and that has had its own specific effect on our own lives.

"All of us, furthermore, have tried to present our feeling toward the colored people in a way that they could not themselves show. Particularly, however, we have been anxious to suggest something more than the humorous side. Though we enjoy this aspect of their nature, we feel that too much has been made of it; that more attention should be given their many undeveloped possibilities, possibilities which, so far as the Southern negro is concerned, surpass those of any other race. I am not talking of the Northern negro, but of the Southern folks.

"Down in Georgia, the better element among the whites feels a great responsibility for the negro, and has protected him always at the risk of their own lives. There have been many exciting moments when they fled to us for protection.

"Mary Kirkpatrick, who produced my play, has always felt keenly the same responsibility. Hers is one of the most distinguished families of the South, and it was influences that made possible the assembling of a cast composed of old Southern families, of people who wished to show an affection that has been intuitive.

"Both of us went to Agnes Scott college, and both of us had a great reverence for Miss McKinney, head of the English department there. Through Miss McKinney Miss Kirkpatrick offered a prize for the best play, and I submitted a manuscript.

"My manuscript won the prize, but it was another work, 'Roseanne,' that Miss Kirkpatrick decided to produce. The fact that I took to writing was due in part to my early surroundings—to the direct influence of Joel Chandler Harris and Frank L. Stanton. As a child I lived near the homes of both these men and I knew them both well."

Miss Stephens's description of Mr. Harris are at once fresh and picturesque:

"Mr. Harris was extremely modest," she explained, "even shrinking. If he heard an unknown voice in his own home he would retreat to the back yard and stay there until the stranger was gone. It seemed that he could not endure strangers. He always wore a slouch hat, in the house and out, and his daughter confided to me that she had to hide it away before her own wedding for fear that he might wear it during the wedding ceremony. When he gave advice it was always homely and direct—just a few clear words. He praised when he could, and when he offered an opinion it was always with a little smile.

"Don't write away from home," he told me. 'There is too much real drama here in the South. Remember also that words of one sylable are much better than words of two.'"

The original artistic interests of Miss Stephens, however, were not directly toward literature but toward music, in which field she has already done much.

NEW YORK CITY NEWS
MARCH 3, 1924

GILPIN COMING NEXT WEEK IN "ROSEANNE"

Palace Announces Hefty List Of Headliners.

Charles Gilpin, colored actor, who achieved wide recognition through his brilliant work in "Emperor Jones," will head the cast of negro players at the Shubert-Riviera theatre next Monday in "Roseanne," which was seen here earlier in the season with a white company. The presentation of the play by the colored cast is due to the insistence of Jules Hurtig, the producer, who is backing up his judgment by taking over the play and starring Gilpin. The players were so well received in Pittsburg last week that the engagement was extended for a second week.

The engagement at the Shubert-Riviera is preliminary to a second booking of the play at a Broadway house.

* * *

"Mister Pitt" will continue at the Thirty-ninth street theatre for the present week after which it will be transferred to another house. The succeeding attraction at the Thirty-ninth street will be Doris Keane and Jacob Ben-Ami in "Welded."

Theatrical—1924.
Individual Troupes, etc.

O'NEILL'S "BLACK AND TAN" PLAY STIRS LEGISLATIVE LEAGUE TO ACT

Wings of "All God's Chillun" May Be Effectively Clipped Before They Can Flap.

WOMEN REGISTER DISGUST

Mrs. Dorrance, Famous Novelist, Is Nauseated at Idea of Making Cupid a Mulatto.

By JAMES P. SINNOTT.

It appears as if the wings of "All God's Chillun" may be effectively clipped before they get a chance to fly at the Provincetown Playhouse.

Prominent women of New York are apparently determined to prevent, if possible, the presentation of Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," with a mixed cast, in which Mary Blair, a white actress, is scheduled to play the wife of a negro, to be portrayed by Paul Robeson, a former colored football star of Rutgers College.

The Legislative League, a woman's organization, headed by Mrs. William B. Hale of Brooklyn, and comprising a membership of 1,000, met Thursday at the Hotel Astor and adopted a resolution of protest against the presentation of the O'Neill drama. The league's resolution says in part: "Be it resolved that the Legislative League of New York protest to Eugene O'Neill against the proposed play and also against using a cast of whites and negroes."

The action of the Legislative League was quickly followed by a similar one on the part of the Century Theatre Club, an organization with a limited membership of 500 members, of which Mrs. Harry H. Thomas is president.

Representative Women Protest.

The resolution adopted by this representative body of women at a meeting held at the Hotel Commodore yesterday follows:

"Whereas, according to newspaper reports, Eugene O'Neill is to produce a play called 'All God's Chillun Got Wings,' in which he proposes to use a mixed cast of whites and negroes.

MARY BLAIR.

Mrs. Blair, an actress in the company of the Provincetown Players, who has been cast to play opposite Paul Robeson, a negro, in Eugene O'Neill's black and tan emotional spasm over miscegenation called "All God's Chillun Got Wings." Mrs. Blair, who is married to a white man, a novelist, asserts that she has no objection to kissing a negro's hand as the business of the play calls for, nor to being pawed over and made love to by him.

"Whereas, we think such a play would stir up racial antagonism.

"Be it resolved that the board of the Century Theatre Club, representing the club with a membership of 500, protest to Eugene O'Neill against the proposed play and also against using a mixed cast of whites and negroes."

Last but by no means least, Mrs. Ethel Smith Dorrance, famous American novelist, has thrown her hat in the ring. She has no sympathy at all with Eugene O'Neill's attempt to make cupid a mulatto!

If all God's chillun can use their wings effectively after the opposition to their flying gets fully organized, then Mr. O'Neil should forsake playwriting and follow in the footsteps of Houdini.

Mrs. Ethel Smith Dorrance, a woman of unusual intellectual attainments, who has won for herself, possibly, a more prominent place in the world of letters than Eugene O'Neill himself can claim, minced no words yesterday in condemning the proposed production of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" at the Provincetown Playhouse next month.

Mrs. Dorrance, the author of many succe sful novels and stories, has had a wide range of experience and observation.

"I am a great believer in instinct," she said in discussing the O'Neill play yesterday at her home. "Often it is stronger in reason than mere thought. As a race we have lived white—all white—from instinct. Why not die white, if we've got to die?"

Violates Good Taste.

This terse and pointed observation formed the climax of Mrs. Dorrance's remarks on the subject of "All God's Chillun Got Wings."

"What I think of Mr. O'Neill's bi-color play," she said earlier in the interview, holding in her hand a copy of a magazine containing the play which she had just read, "is that it is an expression of literary license rather than of liberty. It seems to be that his desire to write something radical—something bound to be controver ial—has overcome his wonted good taste.

"What I feel about it is offense.

"I am against radical admixture. I am 100 per cent. plus American. Nobody is prouder than I am that we freed the slaves. Yet I am intolerant of a mixture of the races—white and black—even in the theatre!

"I was surprised to discover that my maid feels as vehemently upon the subject as I. Edith is half African and half American Indian and up to the last split second of New Yorkism. Her opinion on this subject I consider more valuable than my own.

"When I asked her to-day how she would like to become party to a 'mixed' alliance she said: 'A white husband couldn't take me into the Broadway cafes, could he? And while I could take him up to Harlem colordom I'd be ashamed to. My people would turn up their noses at him and at me.'

Johnson "Horrible Example."

"As a horrible example, she cited the case of Jack Johnson, whose fistic successes on others seemed to boomerang social ambitions into himself. Jack, she said, tried a black wife and then two white ones, one of whom recently expressed her dissatisfaction with the alliance through the divorce courts.

"According to my Edith, the black with white ambitions, is 'nothing at all,' just as white paint mixed with black makes neither, just gray. Black with red? Yes, she says. But never either red or black with white.

"As for a white woman kissing a black man's hand (as in the O'Neill play), she thinks that humiliating to both, since only the worst of alleged 'white ladies' would do such a thing—and then only the hand of the best black gents. And the hand of the best black gent is too good to be kissed by the worst white lady. No, says Edith, not for either her red or black blood—now or ever.'

"In France last Summer I saw the theme of Eugene O'Neill's play being put into practice. While teaing on an ocean-front esplanade at Holgate, a rather exclusive small resort near Deauville, we watched an Ethiopienne, exquisitely gowned and bejewelled, with ebony ankles, in the latest vogue of the moment as to bareness, whose dances were being quarrelled over by the white desirables present. A fine type of young Englishman with whom we chatted felt, evidently, as unreconciled as we did. Especially did we shudder when the swarthy companion of this belle, clasped in the dance and ardently flirted with the daintiest and best born of the otherwise rigidly protected French debutantes.

The French Idea.

"While I was in Paris, the papers were full of the incident of the American who demanded the expulsion of a black man from the cafe where he was entertaining. The offender was put out that night, but happening to be a judge in the court of appeals in a French colony, took it to the Government, which issued a proclamation reminding Americans that they are only visitors when in France and, as such, must abide by the customs of their host.

"In the ensuing arguments with French Democracy, the Americans got the worst of it, were derided for denying in practice what, in principle, we fought for through death to victory. Any protests that a superior experience had put us in a position to know better than any other nation that the thing cannot be successfully done brought only reproaches and sneers.

"This heated little controversy made all the world seem divided into two parts—Anglo-Saxon (we English and Americans) and Latins, including French, Italians, Spaniards and Ethiopians.

"I am not good at statistics, but I've herd some formidable figures as to the short length of time that can elapse at the present rate before the decreasing whites of the world are engulfed by the increasing yellows and blacks. Perhaps if we could be reconciled it would be just as well. And yet, America was founded on separateness.

"Recalling some lines of Kipling's I am pleased to note that he agrees with Edith and me. He says: 'Let the white go to the white and the black to the black. Then if any trouble befalls, it is neither sudden, alien nor unexpected.'

Why Write Repulsive Play?

"In the O'Neill play the idea of the negro, Jim Harris, is to prove to Ella, his white wife, that he is the whitest of the white. No white person will ever want to be black—no white woman would be proud of a black baby.

"Why write a play that is repulsive about a subject that never can be, never should be? Surely the ghoulish attempts at such affiliations would be enough to unbalance minds.

"Only in its sordidness can the theme of 'All God's Chillun Got Wings' be considered to have any pretense at greatness. It is a mere pretense at greatness at that. It is utterly impossible and dangerous. Why cannot Mr. O'Neill turn his talents into the channels of the beautiful?

"The blacks are not proud of being black. That to me is their basic weakness. I believe that they should be afforded opportunities to expand and to develop, but strictly among themselves, without fusion of white blood.

"Haven't we plenty of other problems to discuss and attempt to solve without this particular 'alien' one dragged in by Mr. O'Neill through the medium of the theatre?"

And there the case of the women of New York against "All God's Chillun Got Wings" rests for the time being. There will be further developments.

ART SHOULD NEVER DRAW THE COLOR LINE

SENSATION mongers, chasing the Almighty Dollar, start some queer things, and people who are honest often do the same thing in the hope to accomplish some good purpose. It is necessary to make distinction between fakers chasing the Almighty Dollar and honest folk chasing an ideal, however mistaken they may be. The Negro World

Certain daily newspapers in New York spend more time and space than is good for the commonwealth in magnifying matters affecting the Negro people and their fellow-citizens into "sensations." The Daily News is one of these newspapers, which has a real spasm every time it sees a black and white face close together or white and yellow and brown orientals associating together in dance halls. 3-13-24

The New York World should be above raising such a smoke as it has done over the proposed presentation of a play by Eugene O'Neill, called, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," because the members of the cast are to be white and black. That sort of play has been presented in New York theatres as long as we can remember, some forty years, the most famous and undying of which was Shakespeare's "Othello." Mr. Heywood Broun, the famous and broad-minded colyumist of the World, takes the editor of the World to task for his rank opinion of the play, and states the case from the viewpoint of art and fair play in such a splendid way that we reproduce his article in another column of The Negro World, under the heading, "True Art Should Never Draw the Color Line."

JIM CROW THEATRE CITY'S NEXT NOVELTY

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
MARCH 5, 1924

Epidemic of Black and Tan Shows Threatens to Have Serious Effect on Complexion and Atmosphere of Audiences.

By KARL DECKER.

Jimcrow theatres are to be the next novelty in New York.

There are so many white and black and black and white and all black companies forming that the Jim Crow arrangement has been found to be the only solution of a difficult problem. The Roseanne company, all black, headed by Charles S. Gilpin, will be the first to jimcrow a house, but so heavy are the demands for subscriptions to the threatened performance of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" from the colored population of Harlem that it is quite certain that house will be forced to jimcrow, much as the pretty little radicals hate it.

The possibilities of skillful press-agentry concealed in the production of a show containing a white and black cast are so obvious that several fly-by-night producers have schemes already under way for putting on plays containing one or two whites and many blacks or one or two blacks and many whites and as all such productions will appeal both to white and black, jimcrowry will be the natural development.

Greenwich Nutvillage is all stirred up over the blam created by the threats of producing Eugene O'Neill's checkerboard drama, and it was announced by a group of the leading little he-vamp radicals yesterday that the play would shortly be published in a cheap form to supply the demand from what is referred to by Eugene O'Neill as the "Congo Belt."

It was learned from these proudly self-styled "intellectuals" that the demand for the American Mercury of February that exhausted the edition came from Harlem almost wholly and from the black belt of Harlem. Now that it is impossible to buy the magazine containing the play without paying an absurd price for it, a cheap edition of the play itself is under consideration.

Black Belt Agog Over O'Neill.

Boni & Liverright will publish three O'Neill plays, All God's Chillun Got Wings," "Welded" and "The Fountain," in one volume within three weeks, but as yet have arrived at no decision as to what action they will take toward publishing the black and tan play as a single at a popular price. The matter is under consideration at this time, and the cheap edition will be brought out if a sale of 1,500 copies is assured them. Every bookseller in the black belt in Harlem is busy taking orders, and it is likely that the number mentioned will be guaranteed at once.

"All God's Chillun Got Corns—nunno, oh, no, no—Wings" will not be the first play to be jimcrowed, however. That distinction belongs to "Roseanne."

"Roseanne" has been fitted out with a negro cast, as was first suggested in a criticism of the ineffective work of white actors in this play, in The Morning Telegraph after the first showing in the Greenwich Village Theatre. As then pointed out all possible hope of illusion was lost when a typical and realistic negro play was attempted with a white cast, every member of which left only the impression of being a white actor burnt-corked or grease-painted. A negro cast, headed by Charles S. Gilpin, who first grabbed off a huge gob of fame in the title role of "Emperor Jones," has been very successful on the road under the management of Jules Hurtig. The play was held over a week in Pittsburg, which is rather unusual and it is expected to be a hit in New York.

To Jim Crow House.

It will go into the Shubert-Riviera next week and a permanent home in New York is being sought for it.

While it is playing in New York the house will be reserved for whites and the other half will be turned over to the negroes. The company is under the immediate control of a negro stage director who has charge of the work of the company.

"All God's Chillun Got Floating Kidneys—Wings, darn it—Wings" will undoubtedly necessitate the jimcrowing of the Provincetown Playhouse. Even at that, it is a small, ill-ventilated theatre, and a nothouse for more than the germinnhouse will be jimcrowed. One-half the tion of radical ideas. It is to be fervently hoped that the opening night finds New York in the grip of a blizzard with the thermometer showing 3 degrees below zero. Under those circumstances, seeing the first performance won't be quite so bad. Usually an audience is pretty well jammed up in that dump, however, and it is difficult to look forward with anything of pleasure to that opening performance.

Next Fall jimcrow theatres will be common if the plans now under way are carried through. It's going to be a mighty delicate matter for a high mulatto or a South American diplomat to buy theatre tickets without getting in a jam.

"RUNNIN' WILD" JIM CROWS SHOW FANS IN NEW YORK

"Truth, the World's Mightiest Weapon," is a line carried at the top of the letterheads of the "Theater Co-Operative Service," a theatrical ticket brokerage firm in New York city, operated by Charles Zig-Shye, with offices at 1520 Broadway. Another line on the stationery reads: "Its Creed and Its Mission: Cheating Customers for the Theaters," and there is an additional paragraph stating that "we serve over 600 social, financial, industrial, fraternal and charitable institutions, representing over a million people," and that special concessions can be arranged for worthy organizations. The following paragraphs are taken from a recent issue of the "New York Age," and is certain to be read with more than passing interest by members of the Race who are interested in an equal break for money spent.

Rebates Given

Just what the method of operations is does not appear from the letter which has come into possession of the New York Age, but information is to the effect that certain organizations are furnished coupons entitling the individual members to a rebate on the admission price, in accordance with an arrangement between the Theater Co-operative Service and the theater management.

In a letter under date of March 10 Zig-Shye wrote his clientele to the effect that he had received individual calls for tickets for "Runnin' Wild," "whereas the policy * * * is to issue co-operative coupons only to the organizations who are members," notifying them also that he was reissuing coupons for advantage of members who did not use "the first issue of the said coupons for this popular and excellent entertainment."

Question Raised

As is said to be the case usually with a woman's letter, the gist of Zig-Shye's epistolatory effort is contained in a postscript. The last phase of this postscript raises a question that Miller & Lyle personally may be able to answer satisfactorily, unless they prefer to disavow it utterly. The postscript, beginning with undesscored line, is as follows:

"P. S.—As a special precaution, would you favor the writer, if possible, to keep these coupons out of hands who are apt to obtain these in quantities, especially if there are any Negro porters about? In very recent experiences we have found them in the hands of the Colored element, and this is against the policy of the management and producers of the theater and play alike."

If this particular reference in this case was to some other show than "Runnin' Wild," an outstanding Negro production, running for more than 100 nights already on Broadway, it is more than probable that no such insulting reference to "Negro porters" or the "Colored element" would be made, so it is entirely proper to assume that Zyg-Shye is just as pertinent in his suggestion that "this is against the policy of the management and producers," which certainly includes Miller & Lyle. This is all the more interesting because of constantly recurring rumors and statements circulating among members of the Race in Greater New York that the Negro patrons who go to the Colonial theater to see "Runnin' Wild" are consciously and delberately segregated by the theater ticket sellers.

Mixed Race Play Is Declared Free Of Color Feeling

New York, March 19.—Declaring he has no desire to stir up racial feeling, and his play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," is not a "race problem study, Eugene O'Neill has issued a statement defending the forthcoming production of the drama in which a negro actor plays the leading male role opposite a white woman.

O'Neill stated that most of the criticism of the play has come from persons who obviously have not read it, and says the play will "help toward a more sympathetic understanding between the races." He points out that the Provincetown players, who will produce the play, make no attempt to cater to the general public, and that their playhouse "is essentially a laboratory for artistic experiment." None of their subscribers have protested against the production, O'Neill says.

"On the contrary, many have written urging us not to back down in the slightest," he declares and adds, "we shall not." 3-20-24

The playwright brands as "ridiculous" the criticism against the negro actor Robeson, emphasizing the fact that he played opposite Margaret Wycherly in "Voodoo" two years ago, and afterwards played the same role opposite Mrs. Patrick Campbell in England. O'Neill declares that the scene in which the white woman kisses the negro's hand is "entirely innocent of all the inferred suggestion" that critics have found in it.

Theatrical—1924.

Individual Troupes, etc.,

EUGENE O'NEILL SAYS HIS PLAY WILL BE SHOWN

Scores Critics Who Condemned Drama Without Having Read or Studied It Thoroughly

By EUGENE O'NEILL
Author of
"All God's Chillun Got Wings"

New York, April 4.—In answering the criticisms which have been leveled at the forthcoming production of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" it is well to make one point clear at the very start: That I do not admit that they honestly deserve any comment whatsoever. Almost without exception they very obviously come from people who have not read a line of the play. Prejudice born of an entire ignorance of the subject is the last word in injustice and absurdity. The Provincetown playhouse has ignored all criticism not founded on a knowledge of the play and will continue to ignore it.

Another point whose significance has either been omitted from all the sensational gossip or else misrepresented: We are not a public theater. Our playhouse is essentially a laboratory for artistic experiment. Our aims are special. We are not seeking to rival the theater uptown. We make no attempt to cater to the taste of the general public. Our audience is intentionally a restricted one. Admitting (which we do not) that we are responsible to anyone outside our own organization, it is by our subscribers alone we can with any reason be held to account. Now have our subscribers protested against the production of "All God's Chillun Got Wings"? Not one. On the contrary many have written us letters of approval and encouragement urging us not to "back down" in the slightest. And we shall not.

As for the much discussed casting of Mr. Robeson in the leading part I have only this to say, that I believe he can portray the character better than any other actor could. That's all there is to it. A fine actor is a fine actor. The question of race prejudice cannot enter here. And it is ridiculous in the extreme that objection should be made to Mr. Robeson. Right in this city two years ago, in a public theater, he played opposite a distinguished white actress, Margaret Wycherly, in a play called "Voodoo." In one of the scenes he was cast as the king and she the queen. A king and queen are, I believe, usually married. Mr. Robeson afterwards continued in the same role in England with Mrs. Patrick Campbell. There were no race riots here or there. There was no newspaper rioting either.

Had Actress in Mind

Miss Blair is cast for "Ella" because I have always had her in mind. Her performance in the very difficult leading role of my "Different" three seasons ago convinced me that she is one of the most talented actresses on our stage. She is playing "Ella" in "God's Chillun" because she likes the play and the part. As a true artist she does not recognize any considerations but those as having any bearing.

The play itself, as anyone who has read it with intelligence knows, is never a "race problem" play. Its intention is confined to portraying the special lives of individual human beings. It is primarily a study of the two principal characters and their tragic struggle for happiness. To deduce any general application from "All God's Chillun Got Wings" except in a deep spiritual sense, is arbitrarily read a meaning into my play which is not there, and I feel confident that even the most prejudiced could not fail to acknowledge this if they should read the play. Nothing could be farther from my wish than to stir up racial feeling. I hate it. It is because I am certain "God's Chillun" does not do this, but on the contrary, will help toward a more sympathetic understanding between races, through the sense of mutual tragedy involved, that I will stand by it to the end. I know I am right.

Silly Rumors Afloat

I know that all the irresponsible gabble of the sensation-mongers and notoriety hounds is wrong. They are the ones who are trying to rouse ill feeling and they should be held responsible. The silly rumors distorting the play gave them an excuse. The play itself has nothing to do with it. They don't know it, don't want to know it; they're afraid if they did there would be no pretext left for frothing at the mouth and otherwise having a delightful time. They pick at a headline about "Ella" kissing "Jim's" hand and their indignation grows stupendous. If they would only take the trouble to look up this passage in the printed play they would see how entirely innocent of all the inferred suggestion this action is. But they don't. Indignation, right or wrong, that's the good old stuff!

Finally and plainly, all we ask is a square deal. A play is written to be expressed through the theater, and only on its merits in a theater can a final judgment be passed on it with justice. We demand this hearing. We shall play it before our subscribers and abide by their verdict in the fullest confidence that the play, produced as it should be, can give no offense to any rational American of whatever creed or race.

Here Is the Best of the Negro Pieces

And It's That for Its Tunes and Its Dancing.

"IN BAMVILLE":
A Negro vaudeville by Noble Sissle and Lew Payton, with music by Eubie Blake, and staged by Julian Mitchell: performed March 30, 1924, in the Illinois Theater, by the authors, George W. Cooper, Ivan H. Browning, W. A. Hann, Charles Davis, J. Mardo Brown, Lottie Gee, Valada Snow, Josephine Baker, Amanda Randolph, and fifty or more others.

BY FREDERICK DONAGHEY.
[From yesterday's late editions.]

A populous troupe of eager, tuneful, obedient, and agile Negroes takes up the white man's burden of reopening the Illinois, and makes a go of it. Anyway, the enterprise had all of the statutory and familiar indications of a go when at 10:45 last night, with the plot resolved into its ultimate situation, Mr. Blake sat down to and Mr. Sissle stood up by a piano, and did their especial and personal stuff. Until then, Mr. Blake had been both musical and musicianly as the conductor of an orchestra that knew what he desired to convey, and Mr. Sissle had been the singing-actor of an elegant and incidental race-track tout in the comic drama called "In Bamville."

"In Bamville" is a good show, by any measure, and the best thing in kind so far brought hither. The impassioned jawing and back-chat of the comic men is rather casual and tentative, so far, if you compare their scenes with the encounters of Miller and Lyle in "Shuffle Along!"; but in all else the new entertainment is by far the better. And the give-and-take of the eternal Quixote and Sancho of the comic stage is never so much a matter of *belles-lettres* as of inspiration and night-to-night accretion. I doubt if McIntyre and Heath have ever put "The Georgia Minstrels" into writing.

There is sheer loveliness in two or three of Mr. Blake's songs; and they are sung as he wrote them to be sung. His stunt-tunes, for the singers or dancers, or for both, are sublimated achievements in the art of the bifurcated beat: they are de-luxe jazz without pretending to be something else. . . . And Mr. Mitchell has given to the staging of the numbers a form and a definite but unobtrusive design that put the performance far ahead of any other in kind I have seen. In one stimulating ensemble, "Bandanaland," he revisits the glimpses of the Weberfields moon, and by his maneuvering of the steppers brings back memories of the nights when "Dinah," "Lou," and "Rosie-Posie" were the love-ballads we adored.

There is an idea in the piece so rich in comic possibilities that it might have come out of the Washington inquisitions: that of a down-and-out horse-owner who wins so much money at the derisive odds put on his entry that he becomes the most important depositor in Bamville's bank, and is, therefore, made its president. . . .

A good show, by any measure, and the best of the shows in kind.

* *

News of the Theaters.

The opening in the Adelphi of "Kelly's Vacation" was put off until tonight. A slight revision by Aaron Hoffman, the well-known *rhabilleur* of the American drama, makes advisable two days more of practice by the players, that what Mr. Lou Houseman calls "nememonic lapses" may be guarded against. . . . Nothing save good is reported of the play from the cities where it has been performed.

A. L. Erlanger devoted Sunday to Chicago. He inspected some theaters, examined and admired "In Bamville," and refused to talk for print about an actors' strike.

ACTRESS RECALLS NIGHT IN JAIL

Miss Gertie Miller at Palace Was Once Arrested For Being "White"

SHE IS COLORED THO

Started off With Williams and Walker and Wrote a Book of Poems

By Kennard Williams

In the second part of the Jimmy Cooper Show at the Palace Theatre this week, you will notice a very fair lady, somewhat stout, but as graceful in all her dances as any of her smaller sisters. Your first thought may be when you see this lady is that a part of the white show has somehow or other got mixed up with the colored section.

However your guess is wrong for you are looking upon Miss Gertie Miller, who with Billy Johnson and Sam Cross, compose the Gertie Miller Trio, one of the fastest singing and dancing acts on the variety stage.

Miss Miller was born and received her early education in the city of New York. At the age of fifteen she made her first appearance on any stage. She is of the most pronounced Nordic type; blue eyes, blonde hair, and a complexion that would deceive anyone who wasn't in the know. So fair is she, had she so elected, she could have "jumped the fence" and cast her lot among the whites. But not Gertie Miller, who chose to be just what she was. Oh, no, she is a race woman inside and out, so instead of deserting to the opposing side, became an ardent champion of just plain Negroes.

Miss Miller was one of the original members of "The Policy Players," one of the first plays that the late Williams and Walker ever produced. Remaining with the above company for several seasons, Miss Miller then joined the "Octoroons," another colored organization, and came with them to this city. The show opened at the "Olr Monumental Theatre," on the site of the present Folly. During the engagement Miss Miller and another member of the company, Miss Ada Meekins, (who unlike Miss Miller, was of a pronounced Negro type) set out to visit a skating rink at Westport.

When they boarded the car the conductor snatched the transfers from Miss Miller's hand, and thinking she was white, and her companion colored, started in to berate the former for being with a colored girl.

So incensed was he at this supposed affront to the white race that he began to swear at them. The two women resented his offensive talk, and as no one was whispering—the instigator of the trouble, the conductor—ordered the arrest of the two.

They were locked up and remained in the police station until the next morning. After the hearing the case was dismissed, but not until Miss Miller and the manager of her company had given satisfactory proof of her being colored. The conductor was severely reprimanded by the magistrate. That night the justice saw the show as a guest of the manager.

WHY DID EUGENE O'NEILL WRITE "ALL GOD'S CHILLUN' GOT WINGS"?

A Crisp, Thoughtful Criticism of The Much Discussed Drama

BY WILL ANTHONY MADDEN

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

The opening scene is a busy corner in Manhattan. On the sidewalk are eight children. A white girl, Ella, holds marbles for Jim, a colored boy. They are portrayed as sweethearts.

Nine years later the players are on the same corner; Ella is being treated brutally by one of the white men she has grown up with and his attitude is contrasted with the kindly way of her Negro sweetheart. Ella and Jim are married. Later she becomes insane over the race problem. Her insanity becomes childish happiness when her husband fails to pass a bar examination and remains a simple Negro. She kisses his hand and he prays to be made worthy of "the child you send me for the woman you take away."

Hattie, Jim's sister, typifies the modern colored girl. She resents Ella's attitude for she feels and sees Ella's indifferent superiority.

SEVERAL years ago, when Thomas L. Dixon's book and play, "The Clansman," was produced, I wrote an article on the production, the keynote of which was "What is Mr. Dixon's motive?" So at this time I might say that history repeats itself, for in writing my criticism on Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," I find myself again asking the question: "What is Mr. O'Neill's motive?" Was he conscientiously honest when he conceived and wrote the play; and in its construction was he wholly and entirely concerned only with its artistic value? The answer to this question will have a great deal of bearing on the general criticism that will wave through both the races.

However, as the play stands, regardless of its intent, regardless of what art it possesses, regardless of its play on words, regardless of its opportunity for fine acting, it still remains the most damaging and insulting piece of propaganda against the Negro race that could possibly be written. It is a masterpiece of perfection of subtleness. The play is greatly overdrawn and grossly exaggerated to extremes, and with the exception of a few minor and insignificant points it is not true to life. In fact, the whole structure is ridiculous, parts of which actually make you laugh and I doubt if Mr. O'Neill ever intended that this play should produce laughter.

As one carefully goes through the action of the story it can easily be seen that at every opportunity the effort is made to show white superiority. The effort is also made to show the deep down underlying feeling of repulsion, condescention and ridicule that is lodged in the mind and heart of this race of Nordics in its attitude toward the black or Negro race.

To prove my contention, let us pick out some of the most salient parts of this most unusual drama. For instance, take Jim Harris' continued failure at examinations and the difficulty he has with his studies, irrespective of the tenacity and perseverance with which he keeps at them. This is nothing more than an open declaration of the inability of the Negro mind to assimilate and if by any possible stretch of the imagination it does finally assimilate then it finds itself unable to retain. Imagine such stuff as this in the face of that high brand of mentality shown and proven by the Negro in every field of human endeavor. Then take that part in which Jim beats his head on the flagstones. Imagine, if you can, any Negro doing a thing like this about any white woman. In fact, imagine any man doing an act like this about any woman. In the first place to do this would seriously hurt if not actually kill the person who tried it. Secondly, imagine such a thing taking place in the public street. Thirdly, no man of the intelligence that Jim is supposed to have would even have any desire to do such a thing. To su mup, I will say this scene is the most ridiculous in the entire story. However, I might ask if Mr. O'Neill means this literally? If so, then without question it is absolutely ridiculous and void of every vestige of truth. If he does not mean it literally, but has written it merely as an artistic symbol to portray a consuming and desperate love of this black man for this white woman, then the least he could have done was to have made a footnote of explanation, because practically everybody who reads the story will take it in a positive literal sense, as the average person is not familiar with all the artistic motives of authors and playwrights.

Now let us take the scene of the wedding where Ella and Jim leave the church. What other couple in their position would have placed themselves in that unheard of position in which they found themselves on that morning of their marriage. It is more than evident that Mr. O'Neill does not know the Negro race and it seems to be doubtful that he knows his own race, at least as far as handling a situation like this is concerned. I doubt if he could find anywhere in this broad land a man or woman who would act like he has portrayed them in this scene.

When they return from France and have their interview with Jim's mother and sister the whole scene fairly reeks with insult to the black race and in a pitiful effort to soften this insult the author makes Hattie (Jim's sister) a character of independence and force endowed with much racial pride; but when it comes to a clash of wits and intelligence between her and Ella he makes the white woman the victor at every turn. This, of course, is done for the very subtle and sole purpose of keeping before his readers and audience his belief and contention of the superiority of the white race. This attitude is also maintained regardless of the fact that the white woman in this case is a social outcast, a derelict and a common ordinary type not far removed from the slums, while on the other hand, the black woman is pictured as of fine type and high class. s there any pronaganda any more damaging in insult than this?

(To Be Continued)

Gilpin Quits "Roseanne"; Paul Robeson Takes His Place; In Harlem March 24

Because "Roseanne" has been booked over the colored circuit and will not return to Broadway as originally planned, Charles S. Gilpin has left the cast and his place will be taken by Paul Robeson when the show reopens at the Lafayette Theatre on Monday, March 24.

Gilpin had the principal male role and gave a splendid performance at Shebert-Riviera Theatre last week. But as splendid as his performance was, those who have seen Robeson rehearse declare that he measures up to the part as well as did Gilpin.

Except for Gilpin, the cast will remain intact and after completing a week at the Lafayette will play leading colored theatres of the country.

Theatrical—1924.

Individual Troupes, etc.,

PITTSBURG PA POST
MARCH 18, 1924

Sissle and Blake on Radio Tonight

The late concert tonight to be broadcast from The Pittsburgh Post studio of the Westinghouse Radio Station KDKA will be given by Sissle and Blake, presenting their new musical comedy production, "In Bamville," which is appearing at the Nixon Theater this week under the management of D. C. Whitney. The musical movements are provided by Eubie Blake and the Four Harmony Kings, assisted by the Queen City orchestra.

Blake is recognized as one of the foremost musicians in playing in the American theaters. His piano playing is delightful, and he upsets the old rule which says that composers are not happy as conductors. He leads his orchestra with enthusiasm and authority, playing the piano much of the time, and embroidering his tunes, when he wishes to elaborate. The gift of improvization and ornamentation is still more marked when Blake performs his piano solo in his specialty, with his partner, Noble Sissle, in the second act of the unusual entertainment. Blake's piano playing is one of the features of the new Negro production. The Four Harmony Kings sing the old Negro melodies as they can be sung only by men of the colored race. The keenest critics and playgoers, analyzing the phenomena of Sissle and Blake's offering, pay due tribute to the lyric charm of these Four Harmony Kings.

'ALL GOD'S CHILLUN' OPENS IN HUNGARY

Budapest, Hungary, April 16 —Sacha Guitry's new play, "Father es Fekete" (Black and White) made its first appearance on the Hungarion stage last week.

He has used the miscegenation theme in the play. A Negro physician of the town is one of the actors, taking the role as the lover of an unfaithful white woman. A child born to her is colored and the husband knows it.

4-25-24

The appearance of a Negro playing the lover role with a white woman has not caused the least commotion here, and unusual comments have been expressed.

Mrs. Kendal Played "Desdemona" Opposite Ira Aldridge, a Negro

NEW YORK CIT WORLD
APRIL 13, 1924

ALDRIDGE as Othello

MRS KENDAL in 1892

Was Only One of Many White Women to Support Black Tragedian.

By HENRY F. DOWNING
Former U. S. Consul to Londa.

When Eugene O'Neill's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," is given its premiere at the Provincetown Theatre, with Paul Robeson, a Negro, in the principal male part, and Mary Blair, white actress, playing the part of his wife, it will not be the first time that such a combination has appeared on the English-speaking stage.

ALDRIDGE DECORATED by ROYALTY

The discussion aroused by the proposed presentation of O'Neill's play has brought out the record of the career of Ira Aldridge, a Negro tragedian, who played in England for many years in the early part of last century with great success and with white women playing opposite him, among whom was Madge Robertson Kendal, called in her day England's foremost actress.

Born in Africa?

Aldridge was a very black Negro. As to his origin there are different stories. It is generally believed that he was born in the United States, but his history, as written in an English newspaper about 1848, is more picturesque. According to the newspaper account, Aldridge was born in Senegal, West Africa, his ancestors being Princes of the Fulahs, a powerful and warlike tribe, whose many towns and villages were scattered over a vast territory. It was from this territory that France recruited thousands of her fighters during the World War.

Aldridge's father, the account continues, escaped a massacre in which all his relatives were slaughtered, fled to America and there was educated for the church. He married a woman of his own race and they returned to Africa, hoping to recover his lost crown and also to lead his people to Christianity. The Fulahs stood up for their ancient beliefs, and he and his wife had to ee for their lives. While they were in hiding, Ira was born. The family eventually made its way back to America.

It was intended that the boy also should become a minister and he was educated first in America and later in Glasgow University, but after eighteen months in Glasgow he abandoned his theological studies and went to London, where, in 1826, he obtained an engagement to appear in the Royalty, an East End theatre now almost forgotten. He played the part of Othello, and Whitechapel, Petticoat Lane and the rest of the East End applauded him vociferously.

Played Great Roles.

When, however, he tried to get a chance to appear in the great West End theatres he found he had owed his first success principally to the fact that he was a Negro and, therefore, a novelty. With much good sense he settled down to hard work in such small suburban theatres as he could get a chance to appear in. His genuine ability developed rapidly and, before long, he was touring the provinces and playing in the principal theatres of most of the large cities of England and Ireland.

The characters which Aldridge played during this time included "Othello," "Macbeth," "Richard III," "Hamlet" and "Shylock." An example of the all-round training afforded by his experience is shown by the old playbills, which generally announce, following the tragedy, a farce or melodrama, in which "the African Roscius" appeared as anything from a headwaiter to "Three-Fingered Jack," robber and son of a voodoo woman, and interrupted his part to sing "Possum up a Gum Tree," or "The Negro's Lament."

In 1833, Aldridge was invited to appear at Covent Garden Theatre, which he did, but without much success. The newspapers called him "a thinly veneered barbarian."

Discouraged and indignant, but vowing he would some time compel London to recognize him, Aldridge went back to his tours of the provinces and later made several tours of Central Europe and spent much time in Russia, where he became a great favorite. He was the recipient of many decorations from monarchs before whom he appeared.

In Paris he was a guest at a dinner given by Alexandre Dumas, pere, himself of Negro blood. In Germany Aldridge married Countess Amanda Pauline Brandt, a popular court singer. One of their daughters was a favorite pupil of Jenny Lind, a Gold Medalist of the Royal College of Music, and a successful composer and vocal teacher.

Whether or not Aldridge's lack of success in London was due to race prejudice, he seems to have had no difficulty on that score elsewhere. In practically all his plays it was necessary for white women to play opposite him. Among the names shown by the old English play bills are those of Miss E. Tree, Miss Clara Leslie, Mrs. Boyce, Mrs. Pritchard, Miss Coveney, Mrs. Yarnold and many others. This seems to have roused no objection, but his realistic acting sometimes did. A sailor on shore leave at Constantinople leaped to his feet in the gallery as Othello began to smother Desdemona with a realism too convincing to suit him and yelling, "I'll kill the nigger!" slid down a pillar to the pit and made for the stage, knife in hand. He was taken out and the play proceeded.

Mrs. Kendall His Desdemona.

Aldridge's most famous Desdemona was Madge Robertson, later Mrs. Kendal.

"Mrs. Kendal's dramatic career," wrote Harold Frederic once, in a sketch of her life, "really dates from her first appearance in London in 1865, when she played Ophelia and Desdemona at the Haymarket."

Of that engagement, Mrs. Kendal herself wrote: "During the time that I was there, Mr. Ira Aldridge was engaged to act. Mr. Ira Aldridge was a man who, being black, always picked out the fairest woman he could to play Desdemona with him, not because she was capable of acting the part, but because she had a fair head. One of the great bits of 'business' that he used to do was where in one of the scenes he had to say: 'Your hand, Desdemona.' He made a very great point of opening his hand and making you place yours in it, and the audience used to see the contrast.

"He always made a point of it and got a round of applause; how, I do not know. It always struck me that he had some species of—well, I will not say 'genius,' because I dislike that word as used nowadays—but gleams of great intelligence. Although a genuine black, he was quite preux chevalier in his manners to women. The fairer you were the more obsequious he was to you.

"In the last act he used to take Desdemona out of bed by her hair and drag her round the stage before he smothered her. I remember very distinctly this dragging Desdemona about by the hair was considered so brutal that it was loudly hissed."

In 1867 Aldridge was invited to appear in the United States. He hesitated, fearing unpleasant experiences, but finally decided to come and was to have sailed April 16, 1868; but fate intervened, and he died in Lodz, Poland, Aug. 7, 1867. He was given a great civic funeral, the chief mourner, it is said, being Mr. Hentschel, director of the Lodz Theatre,

father of Carl Hentschel, member of the City Corporation of New York and founder of the Players' Club.

Theatrical—1924
Individual Troupes, etc.,

National Ethiopian A... Theatre School Was Opened In New York City March 17

Movement Generated by Anne Wolter of Carnegie Hall Is Fostered by Harlem Community Theatre Organization, Leading Men and Women of Both Races Working for Its Success.

The opening of the National Ethiopian Art Theatre, Inc., with Mrs. Anne Wolter as general director, on Monday, March 17, marked a new development in opportunity to be afforded the members of the race who seek training in artistic expression.

The movement is fostered by the Harlem Community Theatre Organization, with which is associated many of the most prominent citizens of the community of both races, and its scope embraces the operation of a school that will furnish instruction in all the arts allied with the theatre and many others that are in sympathy.

The curriculum of the school offers training in professional stage work along with the training of competent teachers in dramatic art, dancing, public speaking and diction; and development of playwrights and directors of stage productions.

The culmination of this school is the coming true of a dream—a vision finding birth in the mind of a woman, Mrs. Wolter. For years she was associated with the American Academy of Dramatic Art, and for a long while has been interested in assisting colored art students in the development of their ability.

Associated with her in the Ethiopian Art Theatre School as associate directors are some of the best known figures in the world of the theatre and music.

Corps of nstructors.

The Dramatic Art Department is under the personal supervision of Philip Loeb of the Theatre Guild, while Albert W. Noll, a composer, conductor and artist of note, is director of the Music Department. Among the other artists of distinction in various lines who are assisting Mrs. Wolter in the realization of her dream are Henry Creamer, director of dancing; George Bamman, of the American Academy of Dramatic Art, science and technical director; Lemuel B. C. Josephs and George Currie, of the American Academy; Charles Gilpin, Richard B. Harrison, Jesse A. Shipp.

The list of instructors includes, in addition to those named, Walter Robinson, president of the Walter Robinson Institute, Inc., public speaking and voice development; Ella Skinner Bates, Juliette Cromwell Sammond Yuki Yamakura, Mme. Fannie Belle DeKnight, Ricka Lowy, Florence Adele Redfield, James P. Doyle, Lilla Hawkins, Anna Schultz, Harriet Bretzfield, Helen Chalmers of the American Academy, Prof. S. Grunberg, Kate V. Thompson, head of English Department, Finch School; Daisy Tapley, Constance Ling, Helen May Boxill, Grace Giles and Charles H. Anderson.

Mme. Suzie Pierce Mason and O. Alfred Woods are among the assistant directors, and the stage managers are M. Eugene Corbie, Joseph A. Steber, Oscar Flanner and Leviticus Lyon. Turner & Sawyer of 262 West 135th street, are the stage electricians. Leon Williams and Mrs. Laura McCoy are counselors to groups, and the accompanists

Gilpin in New Show

NEW YORK, N. Y., June 26.—(A. N. P.)—Charles Gilpin, formerly star of "Emperor Jones," is to be cast in a new piece, "The Black Hour," under the direction of John Cort. The production calls for a cast of 11 people.

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 1924

ETHIOPIA AT THE BAR OF JUSTICE

Perhaps one of, if not the most interesting and entertaining side feature of entertainment during the General Conference, was the presentation of the pageant "Ethiopia at the Bar of Justice," by Rev. and Mrs. Edward McCoo of Memphis, Tenn. It was not only interesting and entertaining, but inspiring as well, and the fine acting of many of the characters lifted them from the class of amateurs to that of artists.

The pageant presented the case of the colored man for justice in a very admirable way. It recited his history and made the appeal for justice; it presented his patriotism and made the appeal for justice; it presented his achievements in education and made the appeal for justice; it presented his untiring and unselfish labor and made the appeal for justice; and in many other ways presented the case of the colored man very effectively for justice. The pageant was written and under the direction of Rev. McCoo.

CINCINNATI O BILLBOARD
JULY 12, 1924

Prai...om Nathan Is Praise Indeed

THE SINGULARLY fine performance of the role of Jim Harris that the Negro actor, Paul Robeson, gave recently in Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" brings still further positive testimony to the theory that the colored man is far better fitted naturally for the profession of acting than his white brother. That the Caucasian more often actually triumphs over the Ethiopian on the stage is small answer to the theory, since, so far as that kind of argument goes, the fact that the Caucasian more often triumphs over the Ethiopian in the profession of soldiery similarly does not indicate that the former is by nature a better fighter than the latter. It simply indicates, as the more frequent success of the white actor indicates, that the white man is more susceptible to direction and training, and more industrious, than the black man. The Negro is a born actor where the white man achieves acting. Robeson, with relatively little experience and with no training to speak of, is one of the most thoroly eloquent, impressive and convincing actors that I have looked at and listened to in almost twenty years of professional theatergoing. He gains his effects with means that not only seem natural, but that are natural. He does things beautifully, with his voice, his features, his hands, his whole somewhat ungainly body, yet I doubt that he knows that he is doing them beautifully and, if he does know, I doubt that in the knowing he knows how he does them. As in the leading role of "The Emperor Jones", in which he is a fully worthy successor to his Negro colleague, Gilpin, he here acts with all the unrestrained and terrible sincerity of which the white actor, save on rare occasions, is by virtue of his shellac of civilization just a trifle ashamed. The effect is of a soul bombarded by thunder and torn by lightning. The performance, in the one play as in the other—and no two plays were ever more dissimilar—is hot in its blind illumination. It is not acting as John Barrymore knows acting any more than the singing and dancing of the black Florence Mills is singing and dancing as Galli-Curci and Adeline Genee know singing and dancing; it is something that is just over the borderland of acting and just this side of the borderland of life and reality. Its essence is ungraspable in print. It is of the invisible color of Ambrose Bierce's "Damned Thing" and of the critically elusive quality of certain passages in Strindberg's "Dream Play" or in Hugo Wolf's opera "Der Corregidor".

Robeson is a university graduate, has a degree or two and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

I do not like the phrase natural-born actor any better than the next man. But if ever there was one I present to the convention the name of Paul Robeson. —THE AMERICAN MERCURY

THE WOODS

"Runnin' Wild" continues to draw capacity here at every performance. The midnight show on Thursday night "sold out" and indications point to a repetition of that condition for the late show on the same night this week. This is all well deserved, for Miller and Lyles and their great company have attained a local popularity among theatergoers of both races which is more than gratifying. The press has been uniformly fair and some of the reviews have been of the sort which are sure to be put into the scrapbooks of the members of the big aggregation with more than ordinary pride. It is a great show taking it from any angle and it was given a great setting when it was placed in the Woods, one of this city's finest show houses. The statement has been published that "Runnin' Wild" was the opener for the local season as far as musical comedy is concerned. That being a fact, the writer candidly believes that the big production will take a lot of "following," regardless of what is brought in by the makers of this class of entertainment. It should not be forgotten that this engagement is limited to three weeks, which makes it more than half over at this time. Delays in the reservation of seats are certain to force many to miss seeing the show. Try not to be among the "delinquents." The final performance occurs on Saturday night, Aug. 30.

'Sunshine Sammy' To Form Company

LOS ANGELES, Cal., July 31—The Hal Roach Studio seems hard put to it these days. Ernest Morrison, nationally known as "Sunshine Sammy," has left the lot.

Mr. Morrison, Sammy's father, refuses to give any further information other than to say that Ernest will be featured in his own company. The "Our Gang" comedies will be as a ship minus a rudder, without Sammy.

From Late Editions of Yesterday's TIMES.

"ALL GOD'S CHILLUN" AGAIN.

Eugene O'Neill's Play Now at Greenwich Village Theatre.

ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT WINGS (second engagement), a play in two acts and seven scenes, by Eugene O'Neill. Directed by James Light; settings designed by Cleon Throckmorton; produced by the Provincetown Players. At the Greenwich Village Theatre.

Jim Harris	William Davis
Ella Downey	Virginia Wilson
Shorty	George Finley
Joe	Malvin Myrck
Mickey	Jimmy Ward
Jim Harris	Paul Robeson
Mrs. Harris	Lillian Greene
Hattie	Dora Cole
Ella Downey	Mary Blair
Shorty	John Taylor
Joe	Frank Wilson
Mickey	James Martin
Organ Grinder	James Meighan

"All God's Chillun Got Wings" was presented again last night at the Greenwich Village Theatre after an interval of eight weeks since its last production at the Provincetown Playhouse. Paul Robeson was again Jim Harris and Mary Blair was again Ella Downey. It was explained that negro girls and boys were playing in the first scene through permission from the office of the Mayor, their permanent appearance or disappearance to be decided upon within the week upon the basis of a report from a commission of investigation to be appointed by the Mayor.

The play seemed to be so much claptrap to many of those present. There was sustained apathy and there was little applause at the final curtain. Once again it was the general impression that Mr. O'Neill was indulging in a realistic thesis so stark that the most obliging mind could not supply the essential pauses of thought and action. The play is, word for word and scene for scene of the stage stagey, and it was so presented last night.

The lighting, an essential item, was well taken care of. In one scene particularly extra and separate provision was apparently made by the director of lights for the negro and white actors of the piece.

James Light's direction was as competent as the piece could desire and Clock Throckmorton's settings were suggestive of the author's obvious intentions.

NEGRO COMPANY TO GIVE REVUE

"Dancing Days" to Be Presented by "Liza" Cast Tonight.

Negro comedians, dancing girls, eccentric steppers and songsters who will present the musical revue, "Dancing Days," at midnight tonight at the Lyric theater, Burgundy and Iberville streets, for the benefit of white patrons have drawn numerous requests for invitations, reports Clarence Bennett, manager.

"For the benefit of those persons, who were unable to procure invitation cards to the show tonight at the newspaper offices, music stores and hotel lobbies," said Mr. Bennett, "we have reserved a limited number which will be distributed upon request at our box office."

Nearly all of the players are members of the original "Liza" production which enjoyed run for three years in New York city.

The doors of the theater will open at 11 o'clock sharp, tonight. The curtain will rise at 11:15 p. m., and the revue will last until after 1 a. m.

'TIS SAID SHE'S CLEVER

MISS FLORENCE MILLS

SHE'S known here, as yet, only in reports from Manhattan, where she is a somebody of what there are called the floor-shows, meaning about what is meant in Chicago when they're called cabarets. And she's been to London, too, to perform, and she was the singer of the good song called "Harry" in a day not so long past, when she, Sissle and Blake, and Miller and Lyles didn't find "Shuffle Along!" too small to hold 'em all. . . . Well, she'll be here tonight in "Dixie to Broadway," which is said to have been cut to fit the dusky Miss Mills.

"DIXIE TO BROADWAY" IS RICH IN TALENT

"Runnin' Wild" Continues Popular; Plantation Days at the Grand; Dad James' Company at Monogram

"Dixie to Broadway" opened at the handsome Garrick theater on Sunday night and the ticket seller had started to nod long before time for the curtain to rise. The offering, which might properly be called a "review," carries with it a group of stars which puts it in the "million dollar" class, among them being artists who stand in the front rank as entertainers. Snappy, dashing Florence Mills, as might be expected, is the outstanding figure in this wonderful show and she demonstrates, in more ways than one, why she became the favorite of discriminating Broadway and why she is billed "the sensation of two continents." She carries more "personality" than any one headliner seen within the magic precincts of the Loop in half a dozen seasons and her rendition of "Mandy, Make Up Your Mind," "Jungle Nights in Dixieland" and "I'm a Little Blackbird Looking for a Blue Bird" were accorded riotous acclaim. She is accorded perfect support in her efforts. It is safe to say that as a "single" the sensational Florence would score just as heavily, however, and this was shown plainly by the manner in which she stopped proceedings for several encores and bows with the "Blackbird" number. The biggest demonstration of the night followed the drill of the Wooden Soldiers, an inspiring burlesque led by Miss Mills and participated in by Plantation Steppers. The result brought several encores, half a dozen personal bows and finally a parade across stage by the entire group. It was an unusual sight and the condition carried a thrill which is not likely to be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Shelton Brooks and Hamtree Harrington carry the preponderance of the comedy, both taking active parts along that line in several short sketches which intermingle with the specialties with which the show is liberally supplied. These latter include Harrington and Cora Green in their famous act, "Hangin' Around"; Shelton Brooks, in a monologue of scream producing quality; the big-time novelty act of Henry Winfred and Billy C. Brown, the former being vaudeville's best known Chinese portrayer and the latter a "cork" artist of class and a vocalist of ability; the sensational dancing team, Slow Kid Thompson and Willie Covan, who were given a rating of 98 per cent by a New York reviewer recently; Johnny Nit, Byron "Strappy" Jones and Louis Keene, three hoofers of wide variety but of uniform ability; Snow Fisher, king of all present day strutters; several numbers by Cora Green, Juan Harrison and others, among them being a remarkable feature programmed "If My Dream Came True." Aside from the above Danny Small, Maud Russell, William DeMott, Alma Smith, Dick Whalen and Walter Crumbly are prominent. The original Plantation Chocolate Drops and Steppers, handsome of face and figure, comprise the chorus and the entire production is dressed to the limit. The stage settings are splendid and the music is wonderful, being done by the famous Plantation orchestra, under the masterly direction of Will Vodery, who keeps things moving at top speed during the two big acts and 27 scenes. This is another of those shows which "you cannot afford to miss."

Tony [illegible]

Theatrical — 1924.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK CITY WORLD
MARCH 11, 1924

It Seems to Me

By Heywood Broun

I have one distinct advantage over a number of readers who have written to me concerning "All God's Chillun Got Wings." It becomes increasingly evident that practically none of those who rush in with opinions have read the play.

I am not going to say whether I think it is a good play until I have seen it performed, but I do wish to point out that the prevailing notion of the nature of the play is wholly erroneous. It is not an argument in favor of miscegenation. Eugene O'Neill would doubtless say that he had no intention of taking sides at all, but merely set forth the story of a certain man and a certain woman.

However, no matter what the intention of the playwright, it is inevitable that the public should be led to generalize from the specific story which is presented. The only possible generalization which can be drawn from "All God's Chillun Got Wings" is that miscegenation does not work well. The man and the woman of the play have an unhappy time of it.

Most of the complaints concerning the play come, evidently, from defenders of Nordic supremacy, now and everlasting. If, indeed, the play has any propagandic significance whatsoever, it would be much more logical for the objections to come from Negroes or partisans of the Negro. Such dissent has been expressed.

"The question of miscegenation," writes W. W. B., "is always dangerous and as exemplified in this case it is particularly revolting to the standards of Negroes. . . . The theme does not justify the trouble it may make, nor the mortification to a race of people which has had a sufficiently hard time proving it is human and not of the animal kingdom. The educated Negro is quite as keen as the intelligent white, and I doubt if any Negro with Jim's dogged determination to make a place for himself in the world would have chosen a moron for a wife. The rest of his family had courage and strength.

"If Jim had been weak and vacillating from the start there might be some reason for the play, but no man who studies as he did for years, and tried and tried again for admission to the bar, is weak. He couldn't have spent all those years in hard work and concentration and then give way completely to an impulse which he knows must ruin him. It is not a human or intelligent deduction. The infringement of the law which the production of the play may involve is less potent than its infringement upon the standards of a race of people."

As a matter of fact, the play infringes upon no law.

Jay Lewis of Norfolk writes: "Even occasional readers of your column naturally infer that it is necessary for you to pose in print. And with that understanding it is not necessary to debate with you the theory that a playwright must be limited by law-abiding drama. What that theory has to do with Eugene O'Neill's play, which is receiving no little questionable publicity these days, is best known to yourself.

"The sole question is good taste, or, if you prefer it, good form. It is a matter of observing certain conventions even in dramatic productions. 'We have got to draw the line somewhere' is a fact and a bromide. Otherwise poseurs who write columns like 'It Seems to Me' in their innocence might not draw the line at what the majority of average folk regard as indecencies. It is not a matter of law-abiding drama but objectionable drama."

Well, to live up to the pose, there is no other column like "It Seems to Me." And, to drop the poso, I believe with all my heart and soul that the worst possible taste, the worst possible form, is enforced silence. Whether O'Neill has written a good play or a bad one, he has had the admirable audacity to write on an interesting and pertinent theme which has been almost wholly neglected in American drama and literature. The problem of miscegenation is not going to be solved ever by an agreement not to mention it. Indeed, I can't see how any vexed question will be illumined with more complete understanding by the silly business of ostracising it.

The line which average folk regard as the boundary of indecency is not a fixed point. It has edged out within our own time. I hope to see the frontier pushed forward again and again until in the whole chart of human experience there remains no dark and unexplored territory indicated under the caption "Not to be discussed."

If Jay Lewis thinks that is a pose, let's butt heads over it and see who gives way.

A number of readers have pointed out that Othello was not a Negro, speaking from a strict ethnological standpoint. But Shakespeare had even less ethnology than Latin or Greek. He thought that he was writing of a black man.

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prejudice by sheer artistic ability, and it is claimed "THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES" is the crowning triumph. It has established a standard of music and comic excellence posers, librettists and lyricists in the native to the soil, that white comfield will find difficulty in equalling.

After American
10-31-24
Boston, Mass. 2nd.

N. Y. C. ZIT'S
DECEMBER 12, 1924

Colored Players Progressing

In the past four years, colored performers have made wonderful progress in the theatrical world. In 1921, Miller and Lyles, Sissle and Blake introduced to Broadway theatregoers their musical comedy, "Shuffle Along." An entertainment of extraordinary distinction this, which placed them in a class by themselves, and it ran at the Music Hall, on Sixty-third street, for eighteen consecutive months. After their successful run in New York they took to the road, and "Shuffle Along" was the talk of the town wherever they appeared.

Upon their return to the city the quartet severed their connections. Miller and Lyles started a new show called "Runnin' Wild," produced by George White, producer of the famous George White's "Scandals." After a few months at the Colonial Theatre, Sixty-second street and Broadway, this show had to close for lack of support. It also took to the road.

Sissle and Blake, after several successful months on the road, decided to give Broadway a glance at their new offering, "Chocolate Dandies." In spite of the fact that the "Dandies" wasn't as entertaining as its predecessors, they held the boards for a while, then returned to the road.

Now comes the biggest hit of them all, "Dixie to Broadway," featuring the one and only Florence Mills, sensation of two continents under the management of one of the greatest producers in America. Florence Mills is the Bert Williams of her race today, as she is also the highest paid member.

And now comes George Gershwin with an idea for a colored opera. It is great—the idea. Let's hope it works out as well.

Florence Mills Turned Down Offer to Appear in Ziegfeld Follies

After duplicating in London her remarkable success in this country, Florence Mills was offered a contract to appear in Ziegfeld's Follies and the temptation to accept and fill the shoes of the late Bert Williams was great. She was about to sign when Lew Leslie appeared on the scene with a contract to head a Follies with an all Racial cast. Flo, after considerable thought, accepted Mr. Leslie's contract. "I felt," said Miss Mills, "that since Williams established the Colored performer in association with a well known revue, that I could best serve the Colored actor by accepting Mr. Leslie's offer, since he had promised to make this revue as sumptuous and gorgeous in production and costume as Ziegfeld's Follies, White's Scandals or the Greenwich Village Follies, at the same time using an all-Colored cast. I felt that if this revue turned out successfully a permanent institution would have been created for the Colored artists and an opportunity created for the glorification of the American High-Brown. My wish and Mr. Leslie's promise have been fulfilled in "Dixie to Broadway," whose large and enthusiastic audiences have acclaimed it on a parallel with Ziegfeld's Follies."

Miss Mills is now appearing in "Dixie to Broadway" at the Garrick theater as the star of this new revue.

ATLANTA GA. Constitution
MAR 16 1924

OPEN DOOR PAGEANT OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

Scenes from performance given by the negro students and former graduates of the Atlanta university at the city Auditorium yesterday. The words and music were written by Mrs. E. T. Ware, whose husband was, for many years, president of the Atlanta university, and who retired recently on account of ill health. The performance was given under the direction of Mrs. Gertrude Ware Bunce, of Connecticut, daughter of the founder and first president of the Atlanta university, and a sister of President Emeritus Ware.

(Above), the Wild Boys, who dance before King Ignorance, King Ignorance seated on the throne. (Below), the Egyptian Groups, which do obeisance and bring gifts to King Ignorance.

JOHNNY HUDGINS DRAWS $400 A WEEK NOW

Baltimore Star With The Shuberts Is Highest Paid Comedian.

BATTLE ON IN COURTS

"Chocolate Dandies" Claim Johnny Jumped Contract

For the first time in the history of the mimic world have rival managers locked horns over the question of whether the services of a colored performer are unique and extraordinary.

B. C. Whitney, promoter of the "Chocolate Dandies" applied for an injunction to restrain Johnny Hudgins, Lee and J. J. Shubert and the Winter Garden Company before Justice Mitchell in the New York Supreme Court. Johnny, formerly comedian with the "Dandies," was said to have received $200 weekly for his services before joining the Club Alabam at twice the salary and also appearing at the Winter Garden in Sunday vaudeville concerts.

Whitney claims that he bought Hudgins from the Irons and Clamage Columbia Burlesque Show, "Town Scandals," where Johnny received $125 weekly. The defendants are alleged to have enticed Hudgins away from Whitney's management. The plaintiff alleges that except Lew Payton, Sissle and Blake, Johnny was the highest salaried member of the cast. Sissle and Blake are seemingly financially interested in the production, other than on a salary basis.

Kendler and Goldstein, for Hudgins will contend that the comic is not unique and extraordinary, and that Whitney breached his contract by cutting salaries and laying off the show for two weeks.

Baltimore friends of Hudgins remember that he isa local boy, and received his first lessons in the old Daly Stock Company, under the tutelege of Travis Tucker, will be glad to know the result of the court's ruling. It is also recalled that Hudgins, as a member of the Daly group received but $5 and now is earning $400 per.

A BIT OF NEWS ABOUT SISSLE AND BLAKE.

A glimpse of the men who created the new musical comedy at the Colonial Theater, "THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES," Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, brings to the fore a new type of worker in the field of Colored entertainment. Noble Sissle, who wrote the lyrics and is now regardeed as one of the most distinguished poets and composers of this class in America, began to display signs of talent as a pupil of the Cleveland Central High School, and was the only Colored boy ever elected leader of its Glee Club. From there he went to De Pauw University at Green Castle, Indiana, where he soon became very popular with the student body as a writer of parodies and football songs. This training, together with his work as song leader, went far to launch him on his career as a professional song writer. In 1915 Sissle made his first professional appearance at the Severin Hotel, Indianapolis, and then played with the Royal Penciana Sextet at Palm Beach, Florida, where he joined his present partner, Eubie Blake. The same year the late Jim Europe's Band was making a big hit in the East. Sissle and Blake's success reached the ears of Europe, who offered them a contract that was immediately accepted. Sissle and Blake's first professional appearance in New York was at the B. F. Keith Palace Theater, after which Sissle and Blake, together with Jim Europe, enlisted with the 369th Infantry, known as the "Hell Fighters." They were instrumental in organizing the famous Colored band that entertained all Europe. Sissle and Blake stayed with the band until the death of Jim Europe. They remained in vaudeville up to the time they produced "Schuffle Along" at the Sixty-third Street Music Hall, which made theatrical history, and became the society fad of New York.

Mr. Blake, won figures as both the co-star and co-author of "The Chocolate Dandies," was born in Baltimore, but did not enjoy the latter's educational advantages. However, there were compensating advantages at his home. His grandmother, now nearly ninety years of age, has been the source of his musical instruction and inspiration since boyhood. She was the pet of an old Southern plantation in Tennessee, and the folks can write a letter, but always he submits them to his dear old grandmother for approval. Before they are given to the public they are altered in response to her critical judgment.

It is not so many years ago that Sissle and Blake have conquered rank with the best in the land. Today Colored actors, singers and dancers are among the leaders of the theatrical profession and such shows as Sissle and Blake produce better than a tolerated curiosity in the country's first-class theatres.

Theatrical—1924.
Individual Troupes, etc,

O'NEILL DEFENDS HIS PLAY OF NEGRO

Dramatist Asserts He Does Not Advocate Union of Black and White Races in "All God's Chillun Got Wings."

By LOUIS KANTOR.

ONCE more is Eugene O'Neill the centre of a dramatic storm. This time it is about a play not yet produced—"All God's Chillun Got Wings"—which deals with the marriage of a white woman to a negro. This is not the first time O'Neill has stirred up a tempest. His "Emperor Jones" and his "Hairy Ape" brought about long and heated debate.

What sort of person is this playwright who, like Shaw, has this extraordinary faculty for provoking controversy? What is his conception of the theatre? The answers to these questions I sought recently from him at his home, in Ridgefield, Conn. 3-11-24

O'Neill is popularly regarded as America's poet laureate of gloom, and the belief is held that he is a sick man (in the romantic Robert Louis Stevenson tradition); a hermit, an advocate of revolution, a misanthrope, a pessimist—a man, in fine, probably unable to smile.

Well, it's all nonsense. He's not sick nor a conscious advocate of anything. He's just interested in the progress of "humanity toward Humanity." (The distinction is in the sizes of the "h.") Spiritually, of course, he's a hermit, as is any man of spirit; but he loves life with a Dionysian madness. Any one who has seen him drive his frail white and red kyak (a canoe especially built for him after the Eskimo original) out to sea, singing exultingly, while coast guards trembled for his safety; literally climbing over tall green waves; darting, lithe and slender hipped, down a golden stretch of strand fronting his home in Provincetown, Mass. ("The House Where the Wind Blows" four-year-old Shane O'Neill calls it), knows that Eugene O'Neill loves life and is constantly affirming it.

He likes and is interested in people, and people like him; his friends—bootleggers, bums, literary persons, society folk, prize fighters, even actors—love "Gene." But he just isn't a social being. He prefers quiet, needs it for his work. He works intensively, eight or ten hours a day, for months at a stretch—and when he is free of the pencil and typewriter no hobo could criticize him for breaking the rules of laziness. O'Neill doesn't pretend to be a business man, but he likes to earn money and feels that his work is as important to the community as turning out Fords. He likes to dance, and doesn't so badly. He smiles at least once a day, and I have even seen him eat candy.

The key to O'Neill is found in his belief that the theatre should be used for the presentation of the struggle for existence—man's elations, conquests, sorrows, defeats, joys, doubts—and that it's job as dramatist is to express his vision of that struggle, without compromise to any prejudice, using all the means at his disposal in the theatre.

This conception is made clear in his discussion of the new play. Hardly had it been announced for presentation at the Provincetown Playhouse—an experimental theatre—when the storm broke. These were the objections set down against it: that in it O'Neill advocates, or at least encourages, intermarriage; that in casting Paul Robeson, a negro actor, for the part of Jim Harris so that Ella, his white wife, has to kiss his hand, O'Neill has not considered the deep-rooted prejudice the public has against such a situation; that he is encouraging negroes to aspire above their station in life.

"I don't admit," O'Neill said, "that there is a genuine prejudice against my play. Judging by the criticism it is easy to see that the attacks are almost entirely based on ignorance of 'God's Chillun.' I admit that there is prejudice against the intermarriage of whites and blacks, but what has that to do with my play? I don't advocate intermarriage in it. I am never the advocate of anything in any play—except humanity toward Humanity."

It was pointed out to Mr. O'Neill that the objections to "God's Chillun," ignorant or not, indicated it was felt that some things might not be done in the theatre; that the dramatist had at least to consider, if not accept, the community's social code, that if the community didn't like the notion of a black man and a white woman married on the stage the dramatist should not present such a play.

Playwright's View of Discussion.

His reply was that he didn't think the whole discussion would have arisen had he chosen a white actor for the part of Jim Harris; in any event, the dramatist was governed by his vision, and not the community's social code; and what the objectors seemed to forget was that the play wasn't being offered for public consumption, but to a special public, subscribers of the Provincetown Theatre, not one of whom had objected either to the play or to the casting of a negro.

"The prejudice," he thought, "is primarily economic and social. It is the fresh result of the same resentment which a Paris audience would have against a play in which a German and a Frenchwoman were married; or the resentment in many parts of the world against intermarriage of Jews and Gentiles. Then consider the resentment against intermarriage in our own Far West between Chinese or Japanese and whites; or in India the anger aroused by the marriage of a Britisher to a Hindu."

"But, don't you think there is a difference? Isn't the white race superior to the black?"

"Spiritually," he repied—"spiritually speaking, there is no superiority between races, any race. We're just a little ahead mentally as a race, though not as individuals.

"But," Mr. O'Neill continued, "I've no desire to play the exhorter in any racial no-man's land. I am a dramatist. To me every human being is a special case, with his or her own special set of values. True, often those values are just a variant of values shared in common by a great group of people. But it is the manner in which those values have acted on the individual and his reactions to them which makes of him a special case.

Not a Symbolical Character.

"The persons who have attacked my play have given the impression that I make Jim Harris a symbolical representative of his race and Ella of the white race—that by uniting them I urge intermarriage. Now Jim and Ella are special cases and represent no one but themselves.

"Of course, the struggle between them is primarily the result of the difference in their racial heritage. It is their characters, the gap between them and their struggle to bridge it which interests me as a dramatist, nothing else. I didn't create the gap, this cleavage—it exists. And members of both races do struggle to bridge it with love. Whether they should or not isn't in my play."

Mr. O'Neill went on to speak of how bored he had become with praise for things he had not done or said and of being attacked for things he did not believe.

"Why," he demanded, "was I made an apostle of revolution by the I. W. W. and proper timber for the Republican Party by conservatives as a mocker of the I. W. W. when my 'Hairy Ape' was produced?

O'Neill's Test for a Play.

"What bearing had such comment on my function as a dramatist? The only point involved in that play was did I or didn't I realize the stoker 'Yank'—make this inarticulate human being and his world articulate; did I convey, make visual, his struggle to affirm himself, to 'belong,' to make his 'I' mean something?"

And that, he insisted, was the only test for "God's Chillun"; for any play, in fact. The artist, he said, expresses his vision. Criticism tries to judge whether it is inspired or uninspired.

Breakfast finished, Mr. O'Neill proposed a walk on his estate, acres of fields, woods, streams, a small lake, one rooster (private property of Shane O'Neill), two dogs, an Irish terrier named Mat Burke after the swaggering hero of "Anna Christie," and Finn, a huge wolfhound.

"I chose Robeson," he said, "because I thought he could play Jim Harris better than any one else. And what's been said about having a white actor for the part is beside the point. I don't believe it follows that a white actor could play the part of Jim any better than Mr. Robeson just because he is a white actor, any more than a black actor couldn't do Othello just because he isn't white.

"Isn't it a commonplace to say that the artist must be a breaker down of barriers? Isn't Mary Garden's offer to sit next to Charles Gilpin, the negro actor, who appeared in my 'Emperor Jones,' because he was a fellow-artist, the only acceptable attitude? In England no one protested when Mr. Robeson played the King to Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Queen in the play 'Voodoo.' She is white.

Dramatist and the Theatre.

"What is the theatre for if not to show man's struggle, whether he is black, green, orange or white, to conquer life; his effort to give it meaning? Doesn't that struggle, that endless effort to conquer life, show that man loves life? It may conquer him, but it never beats him, else he would have stopped struggling 10,000 years ago."

And the function of the dramatist as O'Neill sees it is to use all the facilities of the theatre to make his poetry visual.

"The dramatist does not present life, but interprets it within the limitations of his vision," he said. "Else he's no better than a camera, plus a dictograph. The dramatist works just as Beethoven did, employing every sound in existence, molding tones, giving them color, new meaning, thus creating music. Well, when a dramatist interprets the world, and thus creates his own world, he uses the human soul, all life if you like, as a keyboard. He is the creator of this world and like all creators absolute boss. If he isn't a sound creative architect his structure crumbles."

"You don't believe in naturalism then, do you?"

"Naturalism is too easy," said O'Neill. "It would, for instance, be a perfect cinch to go on writing 'Anna Christies' all my life. I could always be sure of the rent then."

"Was it very successful?" I asked.

"Well, it ran for more than a season in New York, a year on the road and for more than a hundred performances in London. It is enormously successful as a moving picture. It goes all over in stock. But I don't choose to write naturalistic 'Anna Christies' all my life. I consider it the least worthy of my plays with one possible exception—though, I think the last act, which was so criticized as conventional, was the most courageous and original act of the play. However, the point I wish to make is that I'm not writing any more 'Anna Christies' because the purely naturalistic play doesn't interest me any more, never did interest me much"

"Why?"

"Because you can say practically nothing at all of our lives since 1914 through that form. The naturalistic play is really less natural than a romantic or an expressionistic play. That is, shoving a lot of human beings on a stage and letting them say the identical things in a theatre they would say in a drawing room or a saloon, does not necessarily make for naturalness. It's what those men and women do not say that usually is most interesting.

"Then I don't think it is the aim of the dramatist to be 'true to life,' but to be true to himself, to his vision, which may be of life treated as a fairy tale, or as a dream. Conceive of life as a huge mass of clay and the dramatist scooping up some of it, creating certain forms with his imagination and art, and then calling in his fellows and saying to them, 'Here you are as godlike beings.'

"It is rather difficult to do that through the naturalistic form. The principal reason why my 'Welded' was misunderstood by some was that I erred when I conceived the dialogue against a naturalistic setting. My notion was to have a man and woman, lovers and married, enact their spiritual struggle to possess one the other. I wanted to give the impression of the world shut out, just of two human beings struggling to break through an inner darkness.

"But the sets which I described in my stage directions were so 'natural' that they inevitably conjured up all the unimportant paraphernalia of living, daily existence, to stand between the life of my characters and the lives in the audience."

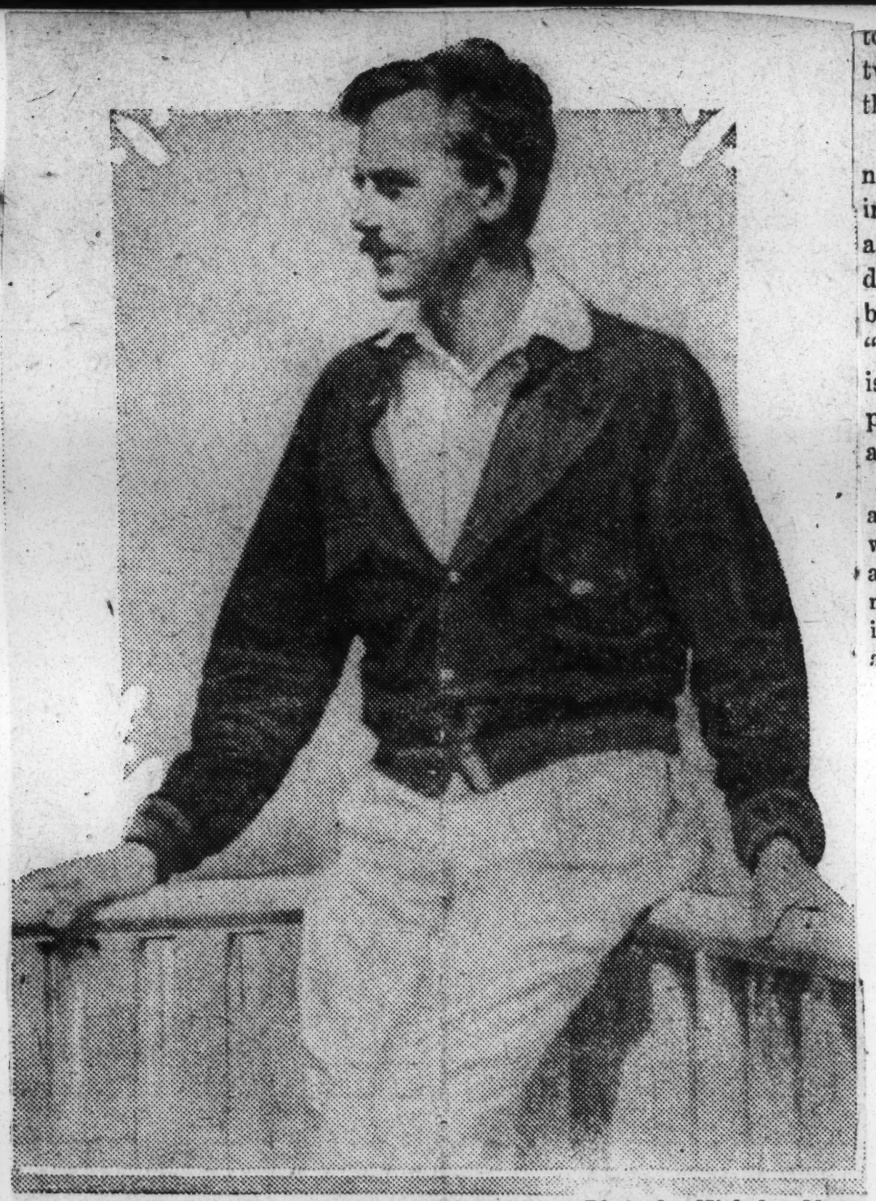

Photo by Nickolas Muray

Eugene O'Neill.

RALEIGH N. C. Chronicle

MAR 9 - 1924

DOES NEGRO INJUSTICE.

Art for art's sake is all right but some American artists have a mistaken idea of what constitutes art. Eugene O'Neill has written a play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," which is to be produced in Greenwich Village in New York that has stirred up a lot of comment because in it a white woman falls in love with a negro, marries him and kneeling before him on the stage kisses his hand.

As the wild dream of one of the literatti it would cause no serious harm because the public has gotten somewhat used to the mad art of these dreamers, but in the presentation of the play a full-blooded negro of unusual intelligence will play one part while a white woman will play another. To say that this is realism does violence in every conceivable way to social conditions as they exist between the two races and hence cannot be excused on that basis.

This play does the negro a great injustice and no wonder that the sensible leaders of the race in New York City have voiced their protest against it. Charles G. Allen, negro publicist, declares that the play misrepresents the social behavior and ambitions of the negro and is a "mass of contradictions." Its avowed object is to prevent intermarriage but it certainly will produce the contrary impression upon the rank and file. This negro's opinion is that:

The play does a grave injustice to the negro and should not be produced at the expense of a whole race. The negroes who are to play in such a drama are not helping their race and are not making any contribution to their histrionic ability. The negro has been placed in the wrong atmosphere in this play.

GREENSBORO N C NEWS

FEBRUARY 23, 1924

INVITING A LYNCHING

Eugene O'Neill is an extremely brilliant man, but a product of the theater from head to foot. He is constitutionally incapable of taking into account any aspect of life except the theatrical, he cannot admit that anything can interfere with the logical development of its drama. A man better acquainted with reality might be a less able playwright, but he would be able to put much more truth into his plays.

The American Mercury for February published the text of "All God's Chillun Got Wings", O'Neill's latest play, which is soon to be staged in New York, and whose premiere is certain to produce some unpleasantness, perhaps amounting to rioting. Any one who has read the text knows why—that is, anyone who is able to see life in any terms except those of the theater, which Mr. O'Neill cannot do.

From the theatrical standpoint, the play is a notably fine piece of work. It is beautifully written, it is marked by exceptionally keen psychological insight, it possesses many of the elements of high tragedy. But it is a study of moral and physical collapse so complete and overwhelming as to be far outside the range, not only of normal human experience, but even of normal imagination. The play is a tremendous attack upon miscegenation; but the subject itself is so revolting that attacks upon it are works of supererogation, and to thrust them upon the attention of the public is offensive.

In brief, the play describes with fearful effectiveness the ruin that overtook both parties to the marriage of a white woman with a negro man. Now it is reported that Mr. O'Neill, with a somewhat mechanistic conception of realism, insists that the leading parts shall be taken by a white woman and a negro man. Naturally, he has had some difficulty in securing a white actress to play such a role, which should in itself be ample warning against attempts to stage the play; but at last he has secured one, and the thing is to go on. We regret his insistence, because it is sure to lead to some unpleasant experiences for both the players, even in New York.

Race prejudice exists, and that may be regrettable; but even if one thinks it regrettable, there is no sense in ignoring its existence. Bubonic plague is regrettable, too, but the way to abolish it is not by creating conditions ideally designed to propagate it.

O'NEIL'S PLAY IS WARMLY RECEIVED

Premiere Showing in N. Y.; Has Been Much Discussed Due to Racial Angle

NEW YORK, May 15.—Eugene O'Neil's play, "All God's Chillun Got Wings," was given its premiere showing before an invited audience and newspaper critics in a downtown theater tonight. The first scene of the first act, which required eight children, was read, the factual play beginning with the second scene. This substitution was made necessary by an order issued by Mayor F. Hylan forbidding children to take part in the performance.

The play was accorded an enthusiastic reception, and there was no evidence of the feeling aroused in some quarters when it was announced that the leading male character would be played by a negro and the principal female role by a white woman. Action in the play called for the woman to kiss the negro's hand.

Paul Robeson took the part of Jim Harris, the negro, and Mary Blair that of Ella Downey, the heroine.

COLORED ACTORS UNION TAKES FIRST AGGRESSIVE ACTION

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 23—(By A. N. P.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 23—The Colored Actors Union, an organization composed largely of Negroes playing in the houses that cater to Negro audiences, the not strictly confined to such acts, has taken its initial step against a theater in the protection of its members. The Howard heater operated by a white man and managed by a Negro, one Mr. Tucker, in Washington, D. C., has been declared unfair, and members of the C. A. U. have been forbidden to play the house.

The management of the Howard has been charged with cancelling Lonnie Fishers act on a two days notice; and Jules McGarr on a one day notice. In addition it is alleged that the salary of Easton and Steward was cut for the second week of their appearance in the house.

S. H. Dudley, the Treasurer of the Colored Actors Union is also the Eastern Booking Agent of the Theater Owners Booking Association and the owner of Washington theaters that are in opposition to the Howard theater which was at one time under his control. Whether these connections have in any way influeced the action of the Union is an open question.

The new development coming as it has on top of a throat cutting competition between the theaters catering to this patronage in Washington is certain to stir up things considerable. The new move will either force the Howard into the T. O. B. A. circuit, or oblige the house to establish booking connection in New York. In all probability it will re-establish the policy or road shows, and get out of Vaudeville, for there is little question of Dudley's control of talent available to theaters in that field.

Theatrical - 1924.
Individual Troupes, etc.,

An Unnecessary Desecration Of Negro Spirituals By Men Singers At Colonial Theatre

"Four Harmony Kings," Splendid Group, Using Songs of Sorrow of Their Race Under Conditions That Debase Their Spirituality—Singers Have Repertoire That Makes Sacrilege Uncalled For.

Recently I went down to the Colonial Theatre to witness and listen to a performance of "Chocolate Dandies," the gorgeous musical show in which Lieut. Noble Sissle, the singer, and Eubie Blake, the brilliant composer-pianist, are the bright and shining stars.

N.Y. Age

One of the outstanding features of the performance is the work of a quartet of men singers—yclept the "Four Harmony Kings." The group is made up of Ivan H. Browning and W. H. Berry, tenors; George H. Jones, jr., baritone; and William H. Hann, basso. If there is a superior singing quartet from the ranks of the race I have yet to hear it.

Individually, there may not be the high artistic development required of a first rank recital artist, but there is an *ensemble* balance and blending of tones, a working out of harmonic values and nuances, that is unusual. The quality of the quartet's singing has long since won for them a distinctive place in the ranks of musical entertainers of the amusement world. The Four Harmony Kings, prior to their alliance with the old Shuffle Along Co., were stars of the first magnitude in the vaudeville world, and commanded choice spots and high salaries in the most aristocratic booking circles, and they still retain their drawing power.

11-15-24

The ability and high standing already attained by this group of singers makes all the more reprehensible their action in sacrificing the most beautiful and sacred of the Negro's Songs of Sorrow for the passing gratification of audiences largely made up of unsympathetic hearers, alien to a conception of the Negro's finer sensibilities.

My enjoyment of "The Chocolate Dandies" was unalloyed until these men, in their speciality number, interjected several Negro Spirituals into their renditions. These songs, always poignantly touching and appealing, were so out of place under such conditions and amid such surroundings, that all pleasure in the performance was tinged with regret that so unnecessary a sacrilege should have been committed by these talented singers.

These songs should be eliminated from the program, and I do not make the assertion arbitrarily. It is based on the reaction which has been expressed by many who have witnessed the performance and whose finer sensibilities have been wounded by the debasing uses to which these songs of the Negro's soul have carelessly and ruthlessness been put. Just the other evening I was talking with a woman who had attended a performance of this show the previous evening, in company with a visiting friend from another section of the country. Their enjoyment, they said, was great, but there was something they did not like very much.

Neither of these women are of pronounced artistic inclinications, either in music or literature. They are a part of that great solid mass which makes up the living foundation upon whiesh our people's future must be founded. Yet to both of them came the same thought—that it was rankest sacrilege to so debase and defile the music that came into being through the sorrows and sufferings of our enchained ancestors, who, when the clouds of oppression were darkest, found solace and comfort for their souls in expressing hope for deliverance and faith in God's goodness through these vocal outpourings.

At various times, and from people in all ranks o flife, I have heard the same regret expressed and there has come the thought that since the gentlemen composing the Four Harmony Jings ar so talented and competent, and since they possess a repertoire that does not depend in the slightest degree upon the desecrating use of the Negro Spiritual for their attractive appeal to the public, they might be willing to listen to the meekly voiced request and omit from their renditions these sacred songs of their people.

In doing this, they would take not one iota from their strength as a drawing card, either with "The Chocolate Dandies" or as an independent vaudeville attraction, and they would make it possible for all of their admiring friends to come away from their performances without a bad taste in the mouth.

In this column last week was reviewed the Town Hall recital of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers. The above comment on the singing of Negro Spirituals by the Four Harmony Kings, as a part of "The Chocolate Dandies" show brings to mind that members of that aggregation are alleged to have attempted to justify their rendition of these songs, and especially the style of interpretation, by saying that the Fisk singers have set them the precedent. To my mind, this is rather far-fetched, since the school representatives have for years been exemplars before American and Europaen audiences of the beauty and attractiveness of the Negro Spirituals. It is hardly justifiable to compare the environment and atmosphere which attach to the Fisk Singers' public appearances to that surrounding th etalented singers of the stage quartet.

There is a possibility, however, that the Harmony Kings find what they consider a basis for their argument in what might be termed the exaggerated essence which sometimes permeates the singing of this present Fisk group. This does have the effect of cheapening the recital and transgression is chiefly to be found in a tendency to produce what was characterized last week as "barber shop harmony." This meretricious and specious effect should have no place in the singing of Negro Spirituals. The development of minor chords is so constant in the music's ordinary progression that it is absolutely banal to attempt any use of the ordinary minor strains as a striking climax.

I do not believe that the present director or leader of the Fisk group, the Rev. James A. Myers, is warranted by the results in making so radical a departure from the methods and standards of his predecessors, with special reference to two men of different periods—Fred J. Loudin of the olden days, and John Work of the recent past.

There is too much an atmosphere of appealing to the popular ear with a view either to the enhancing of a personal reputation, or to the pleasing of a vain and unhealthy craving for popular applause.

Race Performers Suffer Setback

Chocolate Dandies

9-21-24

NEW YORK CITY, Sept. 25—(By A. N. P.)—Not content with having brought disrepute and inconvenience upon the many worthwhile acts that played on the Columbia Burlesque circuit last season, one of the teams that could not find further chance to do harm there about ruined the opportunities for colored acts over the Bert Levy time, according to recent letters on the subject.

Word has been sent out cancelling the bookings of nearly a score of colored acts over a circuit that has long been a recognized "standby" for these folks, all because house managers and hotel people would rather decline every Negro act than take the trouble to notice that the majority of the group differ from the team alluded to. In fact, most of the colored acts look upon these boys and their conduct with precisely the same degree of contempt as do all other decent people. The proper protection of the right to live and earn a livihood in their profession almost demands that the private lives of the colored performer must be investigated before they can get bookings, all because a few morons decline to recognize the most simple professional and personal ethics.

Tickets Now On Sale For Midnight Benefit Ethiopian Art Theatre

N.Y. Age 10-25-24

Tickets are now ready for the midnight benefit performance, October 5, at the Lafayette Theatre to aid the fund of the National Ethiopian Art Theatre in its effort to secure a theatre school and building in Harlem. The students of this school will present three one-act plays and are working hard to make them the best ever presented in Harlem.

The tickets are now on sale at The New York Age office, 230 West 135th street; the New York Urban League, 202 West 136th street; and the Amsterdam News office, 2293 Seventh avenue. The prices are: Box seats, $1.50; orchestra seats, $1.25; reserved seats in the balcony, $1.25; other balcony seats $1; 75 cents and 50 cents.

N. Y. BRONX HOME NEWS
OCTOBER 12, 1924

National Ethiopian Art Theater to Produce Three One-Act Plays Wednesday Midnight

Three one-act plays will be presented by the National Ethiopian Art Theater at the Lafayette Theater, Seventh Ave. and 131st St., next Wednesday at midnight. The cast has been rehearsing hard for this performance, which is expected to attract a capacity house. The proceeds will be placed in a fund to build a school for colored artists.

It is also aimed by the officers of the National Ethiopian Art Theater to build their own theater in the near future, the funds to be raised primarily through regular performances to be given by the negro students of the school.

The cast for next Wednesday night's performance includes Marlena Moore, Lilla Hawkins, Adelle Dabney, G. Alfred Woods, John S. Brown, Jr., Hemsley Winfield, Lillian Fairley, Eulalie Spence, Edna Thrower, John H. Eckles, R. Oscar Flanner and Andrew Choykee.

450 Students Last Season

The school, organized only a short time ago, has enjoyed genuine success, having had 450 students on its roster last season. The aims of the school are to teach dramatic acting, public speaking, dancing and music. The faculty consists of 17 white and 4 colored teachers.

The school gave its performance June 19 last in the form of a dance exhibition and song recital at the New Star Casino. It proved a success. As a result of the splendid performance given by some of the students, 20 of them were chosen for parts in Eugene O'Neill's great drama, "All God's Chillum Got Wings." Miss Lilla Hawkins and Mrs. Lillian Green played prominent parts in the play with marked ability.

Community Theater Outgrowth

The National Ethiopian Art Theater is the outgrowth of the Harlem Community Theater Organization founded by Miss Anne Wolter. It was announced that instruction is given free at the school, the students having to pay only for the necessary books and other supplies needed in their studies.

According to John S. Brown, Jr., president of the school, the movement to develop actors and playwrights, among the colored race, has met with extraordinary success; he predicts that in a short time Harlem will see a theater for the colored artists.

The officers of the National Ethiopian Art Theater are John S. Brown, Jr., pres.; Ernestine Rose, 1st vice-pres.; Leon Williams, Henry Creamer, Charles Gilpin, Henry F. Downing, J. A. Jackson, 2d vice-pres.; Elizabeth Davis, sec.; James Weldon Johnson, treas.; John S. Brown, Jr., Ernestine Rose, Anne Wolter, Walter Robinson, James Weldon Johnson, directors; Anne Wolter, general director of the theater school.

National Ethiopian Art Theatre Benefit Recital Is Interesting

It was a splendid audience that assembled at Renaissance Casino on Sunday afternoon, December 7, for the benefit recital of the National Ethiopian Art Theatre, Inc., and it was a pretentious program which had been arranged for the occasion by Anne Wolter, general director.

The outstanding feature of the afternoon was the enthusiastic reception given the project by the folks assembled, and they showed appreciation and enjoyment of the various numbers. Members of the Theatre and Art School furnished the major portion of the program, but Mrs. Wolter had invited as assisting guest artists several of the race's most distinguished figures in music and the theatre.

New York Age 12-13-24

Miss Florence Mills, the famous little comedienne, now starring on Broadway in "Dixie to Broadway," was programmed, and although unable to render a number on the program, showed her interest by being present personally and commending the work being done by Mrs. Wolter and her associates.

Mrs Jessie Andrews Zackery, coloratura soprano of Denver, Col., a pupil of Oscar Saenger, captured the audience by her rendition of a group of songs. Her offering included "Mi chiamano Mimi" from Puccini's "La Boheme", and two songs by Roger Quilter, the fine young English composer—"Fuschia Tree" and "Love's Philosophy." Mrs. Zackery has won for herself a place in the front ranks of American singers, without regard to race, and on this occasion she gave to her hearers a delightful example of her marvelous art and wonderful voice.

The accompanist for Mrs. Zackery was that charming little pianist, Miss Lydia Mason, who previously had given a group of piano numbers. Miss Mason, a modest and unassuming as she is talented, played "To a toy soldier" by Werner, "Lento" by Cyril Scott, and "Japanese Etude" by Poldini. She was given a most cordial hearing and appreciation.

Other artists assisting were Edward H. Margetson, a brilliant young composer, and Lorenzo F. Dyer, organist-choirmaster of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church who served as accompanists for several of the numbers rendered by pupils of the school; and the California Syncopators, who rendered three numbers to the unbounded enjoyment of their auditors.

The rest of the program was as follows:

"Ode to Ethiopia" (Dunbar), Dr. Ardelle Mitchell-Dabney; (a) Jewel Song from "Faust" (Gounod), (b) "Will o' the Wisp" (Spross), Blanche Smith Eckles—E. H. Margetson at piano; (a) "Onaway, awake, Beloved" from Hiawatha's Wedding Feast" (Coleridge-Taylor), (b) "I stood on de Riber of Jerdon" (Burleigh), John H. Eckles—E. H. Margetson at piano; (a) Robin, Robin, sing me a song" (Spross), "Thank God for a garden" (Del Riego), Josephine Heathman—Lorenzo Dyer at Piano; (a) "Still as the night" (Bohm), (b) "Deep River" (Burleigh), National Ethiopian Art Society—Secalia Butler at piano, Albert Noll, conductor; (a) "Staccato Polka" (Mulder), "Banjo Song" (Homer), Cecile DeSilva—Lorenzo Dyer at piano; duet from "Aida" (Verdi) Blanche Smith-Eckles and John H. Eckles—E. H. Margetson at piano; (a) "Roses I'll toc to thee" (Lorenz), (b) "Sabbath" (Breu), (c) "The Chafer and the flower" (Veit), (d) "Prayer of Thanksgiving" (Kremser), Male Chorus—Lorenzo Dyer at piano, Max Dutzman, director; "The Proud Prince," Richard B. Harrison; Miss Florence Mills.

Ushers for the occasion were the Misses Peggy Govern, Zora Donohue, Mildred E. Blount, Emma Roles, Olive Joseph, Eulalia Dimingo. The stage decorations were by courtesy of Burligh and DWillis, florists, 2315 Seventh avenue.

It was announced that the next function to be promoted by the Ethiopian Art Theatre would be a dance recital during Christmas week. The proceeds from these affairs are entirely for the erection of a theatre and art school in Harlem.

Theatrical - 1924. I.

Individual Troupes, etc.

NEW YORK CITY WORLD
MAY 4, 1924

The Negro and Our Stage

By DR. W. E. DU BOIS

(Dr. Du Bois is editor of "The Crisis," and recently returned from Africa and the Pan-American Congress. The following observation will appear upon the playbills at the Provincetown Playhouse, where a revival of "The Emperor Jones" will take Place on Tuesday night.)

WE all know what the Negro, for the most part, has meant hitherto on the American stage. He has been a lay figure whose business it was usually to be funny and sometimes pathetic. He has never, with very few exceptions, been human or credible. This, of course, cannot last.

The most dramatic group of people in the history of the United States is the American Negro. It would be very easy for a great artist so to interpret the history of the country as to make the plot turn entirely upon the black man. Thus two classes of dramatic situations of tremendous import arise—the inner life of this black group and the contact of black and white.

It is going to be difficult to get at these facts for the drama and treat them sincerely and artistically, because they are covered by a shell, or shall I say a series of concentric shells? First comes the shell of what most people think the Negro ought to be, and this makes every one a self-appointed and pre-ordained judge to say without further thought or inquiry whether this is untrue or that is wrong. Then, secondly, there comes the great problem of the future relations of groups and races not only in the United States but throughout the world. To some people this seems to be a tremendous and imminent problem, and, in their wild anxiety to settle it in the only way which seems to them the right way, they are determined to destroy art, religion and good common sense in an effort to make everything that is said or shown propaganda for their ideas.

These two protective shells most of us recognize; but there is a third shell that we do not so often recognize and whose sudden presence fills us with astonishment; and that is the attitude of the Negro world itself.

This Negro world, which is growing in selfconsciousness, economic power and literary expression is tremendously sensitive. It has sore toe nerve filled teeth, delicate eyes and quivering ears. And it has these because during its whole conscious life it has been maligned and caricatured and lied about to an extent inconceivable to those who do not know. Any mention of Negro blood or Negro life in America for a century has been occasion for an ugly picture, a dirty allusion, a nasty comment or a pessimistic forecast. The result is that the Negro to-day fears any attempt of the artist to paint Negroes. He is not satisfied unless everything is perfect and proper and beautiful and joyful and hopeful. He is afraid to be painted as he is, lest his human foible and shortcomings be seized by his enemies for the purpose of the ancient and hateful propaganda.

Happy is the artist that breaks through any of these shells, for his is the kingdom of eternal beauty. He will come through scarred and perhaps a little embittered—certainly astonished at the almost universal misinterpretation of his motives and aims. Eugent O'Neill is bursting through. He has my sympathy, for his soul must be lame with the enthusiasm of the blows rained upon him. But it is work that must be done. No greater mine of dramatic material ever lay ready for the great artist's hands than the situation of men of Negro blood in modern America.

SOUTHERN HYSTERIA AND HUMOR.

The Age has not been enthusiastic over the idea of presenting "All God's Chillun' Got Wings" with a mixed cast, believing the lynching of the play by the daily press before given a fair and impartial hearing would unnecessarily arouse racial antagonism, and that sensational publicity would do more harm than good. No one, however, should question the right of Mr. O'Neill to produce for public entertainment "All God's Chillun' Got Wings" after recalling the unusual privileges accorded Mr. Griffith in face of emphatic and continuous protest against the exhibition of that breeder of race hatreds—"The Birth of a Nation."

The present controversy has given local white writers an opportunity to discuss the subject of miscegnation from various angles. Those most hysterical and who argue by abusing the Negro usually are of Southern birth and from a section where the white man has done very little to uphold the ethnic integrity of the two races. We are treated with the pitiful spectacle of James P. Sinnott of the New York Morning Telegraph, born in Virginia, indulging in expressions of asininity, which would be comical if he did not take himself so seriously. No one else does. Mr. Sinnott does not seem to know that the day of the anti-Negro propagandist in New York is past. Some good friend should take him aside and give him a bit of wholesome advice.

Irvin S. Cobb, the humorist, has been in New York long enough to know the professional Southerner is no longer persona grata in the Metropolis. He comes from Puducah, Ky., where mulattoes abound. He does not rave as some of his fellow Southerners. He waxes facetious. Discussing "All God's Chillun' Got Wings" the humorist dismisses the subject, according to Burns Mantle, dramatic critic of the Daily News, with the retort: "Well, they'll need 'em (wings) if they play in my town, Paducah, Ky."

But would they not need 'em, we ask Mr. Cobb, in the churches, on the street cars, railroad trains and in railroad stations? For do not tradition and law prescribe against the mixing of races in this provincial town even in worshipping God; and even with Jim Crow laws operative is there not unmistakable evidence of mixing on every hand?

What's funny about such a superficial and incongruous situation, Mr. Cobb.

THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES

Sissle and Blake Present New Musical Comedy

The Colonial Theatre, on Broadway at 62nd street, has been leased for a term of years by A. L. Erlanger, who controls the New Amsterdam Theatre, Gaiety, Liberty, Henry Miller's, Knickerbocker and other New York theatres. Redecorated and renovated throughout, the New Colonial will throw open its doors Monday night (Labor Day), September 1. The opening attraction will be those favorite society entertainers, Sissle and Blake and their big organization of one hundred and twenty-five famous funsters in their newest musical comedy classic, "The Chocolate Dandies." In two acts and twelve scenes, with book an dlyrics by Noble Blake, and staged by that master-hand of stagecraft, Julian Mitchell.

"The Chocolate Dandies" is the most pretentious, colorful, scenic dancing and singing production staged in years. The Sissle and Blake special symphony orchestra is a feature. Besides the stars, Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake, the large supporting company includes Johnny Hudgins and Lew Payton, principal comedians; Lottie Gee, prima donna; Valada Snow, Josephine Baker, Inez Clough, Elizabeth Welsh, Charlie Davis, Amanda Randolph, J. Mardo Brown, William Grundy, Fred Jennings, Ivan H. Browning, Ferd Robinson, Russell Smith, Lee J. Randall, George Jones, Jr., Curtis Carpentier, Addison Carey, Percy Colston, Joe Smith, Four Harmony Kings, the Bamville Opera House Band, and a bevy of bewitching brunettes. Matinees will be given on Wednesday and Saturday, the engagement at the Colonial being a limited one on account of Sissle and Blake's European visit early next year.

CHICAGO ILL. NEWS
AUGUST 11, 1924

PRETTY NEGRO GIRLS AND GREAT COMEDY

"Runnin' Wild" Takes Loop by Storm at Woods Theater; Olympic Has Burlesque.

BY AMY LESLIE.

Always when we are in a mess we call upon our colored citizenry and forget our troubles; that's what we did in the civil war, the world's war and in the waiters' strikes and all local or national discomforts. So when the last ditch fell in on top of the show business down in the loop Woods theater in all its beauty opened to ask our colored singers, dancers, comedians and beauties what they could do to change the drab and blue monotony of dog days entertainment and here they are fifty strong scattering sunshine with bells on their fingers and lightning in their toes defying St. Swithin's ardent work of trying to drown us in the open and bake us in the closed.

"Runnin' Wild" is better than any of the many unique and melodious inventions of the clever and beautiful colored army of willing performers bound to amuse the spiritless and kindle the ashes of despair choking summer entertainments. These delightful mischief-makers, largely responsible for the music and fun in the picturesque kaleidoscope "Shuffle Along," have joined their forces with inimitable George White and slipped along the track of that showman's "Scandals," beating it a mile without stopping to see why or when.

Brilliant Comedian in Miller.

The darker race has never disclosed a more brilliant comedian than F. E. Miller. Mr. Miller is a college man of highest degrees and honors. He has natural and cultivated wit, a delicious sense of humor and a certain richly ingratiating personality not unlike Bert Williams when he was finest. As a running mate Mr. Miller could scarcely have found another so delightfully keen and serious a partner in laughs as A. L. Lyles among all the white and colored actors before the footlights. Miller is not only the chief entertainer in "Runnin' Wild" but he is responsible for the amusing book and all that has not been contributed by Mr. Lyles. They make a great team either in plot writing or delivery of the ninety and nine reasons for going to Woods as long as their comedy goes racing into laughter at all points not occupied by dusky beauties and irresistible melody and movement. "Runnin' Wild" is so far ahead of the old, and first negro musical comedy worthy of notice, the Williams & Walker show of years ago, that it is something of a milestone in the romantic story of the race of Williams, Walker, Miller, Lyles, Sissle, Blake, and the splendid singers and dancers of all the companies then and since.

Especially have the women of the race displayed magnificent improvement, advanced revelation of talent and prettiness. As Ada Walker was about the only feminine excitement in the original Williams and Walker hit, it took several years to convince the modest models of bronze and chocolate that theirs was a beauty distinct and gracious. It took them long to learn how to dance like October leaves in a breeze under the setting sun. They have poise, delicacy, grace and a kind of governed fury pleasant and thrilling. Jean Starr is an exquisite young artist who sings in all-rowdy fun or gentle charm, with a vivid hint of dramatic talent when required. Edith Spencer, Adelaide Hall, Georgette Harvey, Ravella Hughes, Mattie Wilkes and a small savage full of childish romp named May Barnes (I think) who will have Chicago by the ears and keep it handing her bouquets and applause till snow flies unless somebody snatches her away. She is a strange parcel of sweetly young and enjoyable impudence not without sleek comedy jubilant and contagious. She dances as if she were a brown and gold rose fluttering against a south breeze. She is sleek and satiny and touches the earth as some little shy animal does investigating human affairs. May Barnes is probably the youngest and craftiest of the new school of colored entertainers.

Royal Jaunt of Fun and Melody.

One able-bodied step they have taken in delivering the goods is in a determination not to invoke the spirit of white man's comedy. They sing beautifully and true according to their own wild bird likes, they tell on themselves and with rich satire and much love tell what goes on in the Negro mind unsullied by white man's interferences. It is a royal jaunt of fun and melody from start to finish and brand new. James Johnson and Cecil Mock have written the music in fresh revelry of enchanting harmony. It is sung by Miss Jean Starr, the boys and girls of the ensemble and by George Duke, fine soprano singers, a barytone who is inspiring, deep-toned contralto divas and an octet ready to dance like zephyrs or sing like nightingales. The dancing is exhilarating and sometimes mysteriously poetic and always on wings. Some boys led by Chick Johnson set the Woods audience shouting for real joy in their jaunty pedal excitements. Tommy Woods glided into favor because Tommy belongs to us and because nobody dances his way better. Other young mulatoes with shining eyes and teeth and athletic activity did extraordinary steps and the voices of the chorus blended like good wine. There was the inevitable and ravishing banjo and harmonized minors in all types of "Blues" not the least of which were variants, and "Suwanee River" and Kentucky Home."

The entertainment is handsomely costumed in agreeable modesty and taste and it is kept in a politely subdued key, with no ribaldry or coarseness. "Runnin' Wild" is a peach of a show and it will be invited to stick around the loop because the loop needs invigorating new blood a d a change of song and dance and comedy.

Burlesque at the Olympic.

At the Olympic, long devoted to good burlesque at popular prices, there is a new and creditable show coming on as a favorite for the devotees who still like that form of entertainment and appreciative of the kind of effort the Olympic makes to employ the best-looking girls available, the best comedians in the market and the best singers of the rough-and-ready balladry burletta type. The new attraction is "Town Scandals," put together by Irons and Clamage and neatly staged by Lawrence Deas, who, by the way, were all responsible, in a way, for much of the success of the brilliant shows colored people have been giving during the last two years. The "Town Scandals" young women are bright, smart, melodious and graceful, and the comedians being Harry Le Van and a couple more not so well known, fun is fairly acceptable and as clean as a censor could make it. Elliott Carpenter wrote the music and it is nicely put over by little Estelle Nack, whose pet burlesque name is "Arab," with all that implies; Harry Le Van himself, who is a famous pounder of the cold ivories in pianologues, and a good singer. Then Corinne Wilson, Billie Gerber, Jim De Pinto, Manny Kahn, a good male quartet and many neat girls, who dance and make the welkin ring pleasantly. It is well staged and is the best low-price show in the country. Bard and Pearl are preparing another show, "The Good Little Devils," to follow this at the Olympic and the regular season has an agreeable lot of good promises in the bookings.

NEW YORK CITY TIMES
AUGUST 24, 1924

The Prompt Book

By STARK YOUNG.

NOW that the race discussions have quieted down and the arguments over giving a play that shows a white woman married to a negro have exhausted the subject, it will be a good thing to talk once more of Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as art.

For the sting of realistic detail "All God's Chillun Got Wings" cannot compare with the first act of "Anna Christie" and does not try in that method to compete with it. It is not so good as "The Emperor Jones" for sheer theatricality and line. It has not the line and pattern of "The Hairy Ape." Nor has it the fable of "The Hairy Ape," which has a story that is in itself swiftly and unforgetably the whole play. As achievement "All God's Chillun Got Wings" does not surpass Eugene O'Neill's other work, but in depth of motive and spirit it is an advance.

The theme of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" is love and not primarily a race problem. It is love with enormous impediments to its progress and fulfillment, impediments of prejudice, race, shame, madness, things as deep as birth and death and life itself. In the thinking out to its concluding ideas this play seems to me profound and impressive. In the actual scenes less so, especially the first half; and in the production or performance even less.

The opening scenes, well on past the first intermission, dragged. I kept thinking that the intention was good, was right, but that somehow it did not come off. For one thing, the tempo was relaxed and slow. The lines, the words, seemed often to mean what was true to the moment but to remain uninspired. As entertainment it was not very much alive. And yet it was impressive somewhere back in one's head by reason of its direction and intensity.

Many people, to judge by the things they say in the lobby, and have said elsewhere, take such a production as that given at the Greenwich Village Theatre to "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as doing its little best to emulate the regular doings of Broadway. With varying degrees of patience various persons look on such a style of production, such simplification and such frank convention or arrangement, as amateurish. This is wrong. But such people arrive at such conclusions through a common impression abroad in the theatre that the art of the theatre is always aiming at realism, and if not realism at elaborations on the real. They assume that the haven of the theatrical artist is to copy ordinary nature, exactly as they assume that Botticelli or El Greco when they paint men would gladly make their pictures as much like our anatomy as possible. As for this production at the Greenwich Village Theatre, these people say to themselves that if the scenes were given in a good, bang-up, familiar professional style we should see them go off differently enough.

The truth, however, is that the idea, at least, behind the production of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" is plainly conscious of its design and method. The acting of James Martin as Mickey, it is true, and of Frank Wilson as Joe, and, alas! of Dora Cole as Hattie, is amateur in the sorriest sense, all the worse as art, perhaps, for being congenitally so similar to the characters portrayed. The method used by Mary Blair is no more amateurish, however, than the lighting of the scene is amateurish as compared with the usual realistic lighting. The fact is that a bang-up and shining professional production of these O'Neill scenes would ruin them wholly. They would be thrown out of joint, made hollow and false and crude.

What has to be said, then, is not that these scenes as now done are highly successful, but that Eugene O'Neill has created a good many scenes in recent years that are out of style for the general run of acting in our theatre. It is not that these scenes are too fine or too excellent or emotionally too difficult. It is that they attempt a method that has no parallel in the kinds of acting we employ. Take the wedding scene in "All God's Chillun Got Wings." We hear a song behind the closed door. Then on either side of the steps the crowd gathers, the whites on one side, the blacks on the other, the couple appear, the whites are nearest the man, the blacks nearest the white woman who is the bride. The two make their way in anguish down the steps. Nobody has much to say except the bridegroom, who has a long, tortured monologue. All this is good theatrical invention; it has a pattern, a meaning. But the whole scene went more or less flat. Some sort of marking was needed in the acting, some stylization in the same genre as the writing. A matter of acting and production this is, but the writing itself may also be to blame. The dramatist will either have to carry these scenes further toward an expressionistic or frankly symbolistic or stylized form, or let them rest in a more tangible realism; either carry the method further or less far than he has done. Whatever the method, it should be single and unescapable.

Throughout "All God's Chillun Got Wings" a great part of the theatrical stir and intensity must depend on the acting of the two leading rôles, the white woman and the negro man. In Paul Robeson's case, who took the man's part, we have a singular instance of a small talent and a large comprehension of the character and situation. Paul Robeson gave the impression of understanding the play, its last meanings, its tragic thrust, its fatality, lyricism and almost mystical themes and insights. He achieved thus a certain pathos of implications. A certain exotic quality came from the racial difference in voice and personality. But he showed little talent. As an actor he was monotonously tense and bulky. The phrase and emphasis of his speeches seemed to come from far back in a thinking head, but to have no connection with the tone or rhythm employed. He had almost no pantomime. A simple example was the moments when he sat at the table to study. In the art of acting this kind of thing is one of the simplest tests of talent. A concentration of line, a flow, a unity of rhythm appears that is the very life of the act portrayed. Mr. Robeson sat working hard as usual, tensely, blinking his eyes, doing something every moment, but creating nothing.

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At the very last of the play, where the directing also was remarkable, he was much better; the combined force of his own beautiful emotion and the power of the theme carried the scene to a great conclusion.

New York City
Mary Blair gave the same indications of knowing what her part was about and what the struggle and surge of the play might mean. Her work was unequal, but often good, especially where the scene was without words or driven to violent feeling. She is a young actress who has not yet learned how to hold her work to a continuous and unified pressure and a more or less memorized and even execution. But she has talent. She has an extraordinary tension and strange nervous power that can in time establish her in more than one kind of rôle in our theatre.

"All God's Chillun Got Wings," so far as total accomplishment goes, seems to me incomplete but reasonably successful. The thing that remains in the mind from this play and that makes it memorable is the greatness of its direction. The essential theme of this drama aims at the profundity of the great myth, dark with a mystery almost biological, beautiful with passionate desire for range and scope. The use of the Congo mask as symbolizing for the woman the negro race, the horror, the hate, is fine theatrical imagination. And most of all we have the themes at the conclusion of the play for the love situation between this black man and his white wife, where the woman wishes him to fail in his law examinations and so remain inferior, and to love her as his child, and to be only Uncle Jim who has been with us for years, and where the negro man sinks on his knees before God. These are tremendous spiritual and dramatic motivations, greatly imagined, moving and powerful with life.

8-24-24

N. Y. C. WOMENS WEAR
SEPTEMBER 2, 1924

NEVER A DULL MOMENT AT NEW COLORED SHOW

"The Chocolate Dandies Scores Deserved Success at Colonial —Blake and Sissle Well Received by Audience.

COLONIAL THEATRE — "The Chocolate Dandies," book by Noble Sissle and Lew Payton, music and lyrics by Sissle and Blake.. Staged by Julian Mitchell.

The Cast.

At the Piano.....Eubie Blake
Mandy Green, the Deacon's Wife..Amanda Randolph
Sammy, Mandy Green's Baby.....Gwendolyn Feaster
Black Joe, Jr.....Addison Carey
That Comedy Chorus Girl.....Josephine Baker
Struttin' Drum Major and His Bamville Band.J. Mardo Brown
Bill Splivens, Plantation Owner.....W. A. Hann
Mr. Hez Brown, President of Bamville Fair....William Grundy
Mrs. Hez Brown, the Wife—.....Inez Clough
Angeline Brown, the Daughter.....Lottie Gee
Jessie Johnson.....Elizabeth Welsh
Manda, Bill Spliven's Niece.....Valada Snow
Uncle Eph, Trainer of Rarin' To-Go.....Fred Jennings
Dobby Hicks, Race-Horse Tout.....Noble Sissle
Dan Jackson, Owner of Rarin' To-Go.....Ivan H. Browning
Shorty, Dumb Luck's Jockey.....Ferdie Robinson
Johnnie Wise, Village Rube.....Russell Smith
Mose Washington, Owner of Dumb Luck.....Lew Payton
Joe Dolks, Owner of Jump Steady.....Johnny Hudgins
Silas Green, the Deacon.....Lee J. Randall
Bookmaker.....George Jones, Jr.
Snappy, Rarin' To-Go's Jockey.....Charlie Davis
Sandy Scarecrow's Jockey.....Curtis Carpentier
Jump Steady..John Alexander, Chic Fisher

There is no doubt of the fact that this new musical comedy is one of the, if not the best negro show which has ever been presented. Even though the heat was almost unbearable, the audience at the Colonial last night greeted the players with much enthusiasm, and it was necessary for all of the headliners to take many encores.

Action, fast and furious, dancing and singing acts, dancing chorus ensembles, all came tumbling one after the other, allowing never a dull moment to interrupt the thought that it was a musical play.

It should be said that the play is better staged than anything that has heretofore been attempted in shows of this sort, and the costumes were far superior in every way, being fashioned of good materials and modish. The scenes were well done and brought forth much applause.

Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, coauthors of the play, were enthusiastically received, especially in the scene where Eubie Blake played the piano and Noble Sissle sang parts from the old songs which they composed years ago. Lew Payton, who is co-author with Sissle of the book, attracted much applause with his bits of comedy, and the Harmony Kings were so well received that it seemed as though they would never be through with encores.

The strange antics in dance numbers by Miss Josephine Baker brought forth many laughs, and another interesting scene was that which Lew Payton shared with a horse. The story of the show centers around two owners of race horses, with all the comedy that could easily be introduced in the underhand workings of the two rivals.

A scene that created hearty applause was the race scene when three real horses galloped across a moving floor, the bit being most realistic with the jockeys in their bright satins, urging the horses on.

The music is most tuneful, especially the "Thinking of Me" number which Miss Lottie Gee sang and Eubie Blake accompanied on the piano. "Dixie Moon" also came in for a number of encores, and the "Slave of Love."

All in all, it is practically safe to say that the play is here for sometime, judging by the way the opening night audience received it.

"HOW COME" PRODUCER AND AUTHOR SCRAP

(Special Service of the News)

It may be a good press agent and it may be real bitterness between the author and the producer of "How Come," celebrated comedy in which Ethiopian histrionic skill has won its place on the American stage. But, whichever it is, advertising aplenty is likely to come to all the parties concerned. They have entered upon legal controversy in the Court of Chancery, where each sets up a claim that the other is usurping his rights to offer the "show."

8-16-24

Eddie Hunter, famous colored comedian and actor, entered into an agreement in 1922 as a result of which he wrote "How Come" for the Criterion Productions, Inc. It was then produced with Eddie Hunter in the lead and a number of celebrated colored performers in the cast. The copyright was assigned to the company and Hunter was to get royalties. There was a big Broadway run in 1923, in which all parties profited.

Subsequently the copyright was reassigned and it came into the hands of Ben Harris, well-known producer, who invested $100,000 and was the company's principal stockholder.

Now it is charged that Hunter conspired with other members of the "How Come" outfit to do financial injury to Harris and to enrich themselves. It is alleged that Hunter quit the company and induced other members of the cast to quit with him. A new company was formed by Hunter, it is charged, and since then "How Come" in toto and in parts has been peddled throughout the country.

Harris charges that in his conduct Hunter has violated the terms of the copyright which give exclusive rights to the holder. He filed his bill of complaint July 28 to prevent the "unlawful" playing of what is known as the "bootlegging scene" at the Lyric Theatre, in Hoboken, where Hunter was scheduled to appear.

The matter was to have been heard by Vice-Chancellor John Bentley yesterday. He is asked to enjoin and restrain Hunter and all others from offering or showing the play "How Come" or any part of it before the public.

William Goldweber, counsel for Hunter, yesterday questioned the service made upon his client, but finally agreed to enter an appearance. The Court will hear the story next Monday.

Professor Fudge

White Actor Sings "The Blues"

The Regent Theatre offered a very good bill last week. There were four acts, two of which were white and two of which were colored. The peculiar thing about it however was that a white boy sang the "blues." He not only sang the blues, but sang them according to the best Negro authorities.

Ordinarily, it is supposed a white person can not master or well learn those mournful notes. All of the colored theatres of the Regent type have the blues as their corner stone. They have been sung within their confines when they were sung no where else and were always looked upon as Negro specialties and any Negro who could sing at all could sing the blues. Just as a colored man is given credit for knowing more about race horses and dice games, so is he credited with having all the "jew" on the blues.

However this white boy took a chance and according to the opinions of the every nighters he was very good. It was also noticed his linenes were spotless, his clothes were in good taste and clean and his stage manners were generally good. On the other hand when any numbers of our people appear behind the footlights, one is always in doubt as to whether their raiment is clean or dirty. As a rule you could not say their clothes were dirty, yet you could not say they were clean. Let us also remember not many years ago colored women mostly depended on the wash that was taken in to keep the wolf from the door. As it stands now the colored actors had better tighten up or there will be more white ones taking their places even in the colored houses Let it not be said of the colored actors that "they can't even sing the blues," a strictly colored product.

Editor's Note—This joke is on Fudge. The actor referred to above, Sammy Lewis, is colored. He fooled me, too.

CLEVER COLORED FOLK IN ELABORATE REVUE

"Dixie to Broadway" at Garrick Brings Florence Mills and Great Comedians.

BY MARGARET MANN CROLIUS.

When a slim little brown girl walked out on the stage of the Garrick theater Sunday night she was greeted with applause which kept her smiling in a wondering way and tracking her little knee and pulling at a boy's cap she was wearing for a longer time than most great stars are kept waiting. Then, in a high soprano, she started in to sing of "Dixie Dreams" and to dance with a grace and rhythm beautiful to behold, the wonder extended to her audience and set the white folks asking who she was and what she had done before.

7-25-24

8-10-24.

About all the wise ones could tell the others was that her name was Florence Mills and that she was at the head of the cast of men and women of her race in the song and dance revue called "Dixie to Broadway," which relighted the Garrick theater this week, the advertising stating that she was "the sensation of two continents." Certain it is that she was the sensation of the opening evening's bill, although there were others who were not far behind in popularity, notably the cafe-au-lait beatuty, Cora Green, and a galaxy of young dancers who frolicked like brown leaves on a gust of October wind.

Features of the Revue.

"Dixie to Broadway", unlike "Shuffle Along," "In Bamville" or "Runnin' Wild," is Afro-American vaudeville rather than musical comedy with that which the movie folk call "continuity." No thread of a story runs through "Dixie to Broadway" any more than through the "Follies" or "Artists and Models" or "Scandals."

There are stunning and effective ensembles, specialties by teams from vaudeville, sketches with elaborate settings and great comedy figures, solos by real singers, a stageful of imitation George Cohans, Eva Tanguays, Gallagher and Sheans, Belasco Kikis and reincarnations of Williams and Walkers, together with many other original and zestful scenes, all done with astonishing enthusiasm and precision.

Shelton Brooks and Hamtree Harrington are the two comedians who provide the greater part of the fun. They are seen first in the sketch, "The Wrong Cop," in which both are cast as penniless and hungry patrons of a restaurant with a scheme for outwitting the waiter. They are also excruciatingly funny in "Treasure Castle" in their assumed fright, and there are other appearances that show what a sense of comedy they have, particularly Brooks, who is a constant reminder of Bert Williams.

There is colorful work in a burlesque of Balieff's "Chauve Souris," which is so suggestive of the Russian visitors themselves and is yet so tuneful and vivid that it stands out as one of the best things of the evening. Here Danny Small and the "Plantation Chocolate Drops," as the chorus of demon dancers are called, appear to the "Katinka" music, and Florence Mills, with the "Plantation Steppers," is such a trig, exact, military and atractive leader that the beloved "Wooden Soldiers" march lives again with a new kind of charm and a "sealskin" color.

The bit between the U. S. jacky and the Chinaman is done with art, and the performers, as nearly as one could make out, are Winifred and Brown.

Some of the songs which call out the singing and dancing strength of the company—a strength which is many horse power—are "Put Your Old Bandanna On," "Jungle Nights in Dixieland," "Mandy, Make Up Your Mind," "Jazz Time Came From the South," "Struttin' 'Round with Sammy" and "Trottin' to the Land of Cotton Melodies." There are pretentious settings for these tasteful and striking costumes, and all the glamour and sheen one finds in any of the big revues.

So much has been written about the dancing of the colored folk in the shows presented within the last few years that nothing remains to be added in praise and wonder. Their work together and in groups is remarkable and the eccentric dancing of Johnny Nit, Byron Jones and Lew Keene is something to marvel at as each in turn does his stunts.

Cora Green sings in a rich contralto and is given the only unpleasantly suggestive songs and lines in the whole show. She is at home on the stage and has an attractive personality and it is too bad to have a blot of this kind on the entertainment.

Plantation Orchestra Works.

The value of Will Vodery's "famous plantation orchestra" has been stressed in publicity and on the theater programs, but to persons of normal hearing it is a torture with its blatant brasses. It could be toned down to advantage and would still give the chorus plenty of support and that without drowning out the soloists. The music for the revue was written by George W. Meyer and Arthur Johnson; the lyrics by Grant Clark and Roy Turk; the book by Walter De Leon, Tom Howard and Lew Leslie, and the entire production was staged by Lew Leslie.

India Has Cooling System.

Doctors in India, because of the excessive heat at certain seasons, have had to work out a system of cooling rooms where they were treating tropical diseases. Nowadays a room can be kept at 30 degrees lower temperature than the air outside. It is insulated by cork and as the hot air is drawn out by suction, cool air that has passed over a refrigerating device is pumped in. Furthermore the doctors have proved by many experiments that patients can go from the cool room to the outside hot air and vice versa without damaging effects on their physical state.

Swiss Deport Communist Chiefs.

[By The Associated Press.]

Bern, Switzerland, Aug. 19.—Two communist leaders—Deputy Thomas of Berlin and M. Libert, secretary of the French communist party—have been deported by the Swiss government. They were arrested recently in Zurich charged with circulating communist propaganda.

ENGLISH "ALL GOD'S CHILLUN" A SENSATION

London Colored Folk Rush To See Latest Play Dealing With Race Problem In Africa

London, Eng., Sept. 19.—"White Cargo" is the name of the latest drama to take London by storm. Criticism has only increased its popularity.

The nearest thing to it on the American stage is the play by Eugene O'Neill, "All God's Chillun Got Wings." Like the American play, "White Cargo" deals with the race problem in West Africa. There is much drinking, kissing and love making and in the end the white Englishman, sent out to represent his firm in the Gold Coast, weds the native girl he seduced.

Leon Gordon, the author, is so pleased with the success of "White Cargo" tha the is engaged in writing a South African play with a similar theme. All actors are white but the heroine is browned up for her part.

Two Motives

Two motives run prominently thru the play. One pictures the European novice on the West African coast, submitting to the craze for alcohol on one hand and on the other to sensual lust aggravated by the enervating unhealthy climate. There where climate kills one person, the craze for drink carries off five.

The hero is warned sufficiently against the drink habit. His mother warns him before leaving "to say his prayers every night." His father tells him to "play the game." Fellow countrymen on board ship advise him never to take a drink before sundown, which precept they themselves regularly violate.

Advice is one thing, but a tropical sun beating down mercilessly, turning every thing into dry rot is another. The hero succumbs both the lure of rum and the wiles of a seductive mulatto native girl, and the stormy love scenes which follow have never been more daringly portrayed on the local stage.

Love for the man means an outlet for his emotions and a temporary escape from the thot of the burning tropics. For the woman it means that she will have prettier dresses and more beads and spangles.

Critics Are Riled

Newspaper critics storming at the play declare that it will do the European no good and surely the native none. The seamy side of life is made too prominent, writes one critic, while another recalls that the play is a new weapon forged to lower the prestige of the European with the native.

A third critic complains that every colored man in London, many of them young students, are flocking to see the play and a fourth hopes that the drama will not be filmed and sent out to the colonies. It is bad enough for the Europeans to ruin the native girls, but to suggest marriage in a play or film, pfouf, never.

Florence Mills Hailed as Genius in "Dixie to Broadway" by N. Y. Critics

White Broadway Dramatic Writers Again Pointing to Accomplishments of Colored Stars Who Took Broadway by Storm in "Shuffle Along."

The leading critics of the New York newspapers could hardly find praise extravagant enough to lavish upon the genius of Miss Florence Mills, displayed in the new colored musical comedy, "Dixie to Broadway," which had its first performance at the Broadhurst, a leading Broadway theatre, on the night of Wednesday, October 29. Believing that an artist like Miss Mills in achieving such a triumph is making a great contribution to her race, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has assembled the following tribute to Miss Mills from the New York critics:

E. W. Osborn in the Evening World said in part:

"A slender streak of brains about five feet tall, born a shade or two South of the color line, sang and danced and played with all the emotions at the Broadhurst Theatre last night, and held at will a big audience of the jaded and different kind that wants every little while its fresh revue and wants it good. She was Florence Mills, the little genius. 'The sensation of two Continents,' featured in London in the recent season and headlined now in New York as the star of 'Dixie to Broadway,' a new all-color revue in two acts and a dozen scenes. Miss Mills is no narrow-gauge genius. She is the lithe and nervous embodiment of the song and the sorrow, the poetry and the pathos, and the rich comedy of her race."

Gilbert W. Gabriel in the Telegram and Mail:

"Of course, the not so dark particular star of all this jamboree is Florence Mills. This sensational little personality, slim, jaunty, strung on fine and tremulous wires, continues to tease the public's sense of the beautiful and odd. There is an impudent fragility about her, a grace of grotesqueness, a humor of wrists, ankles, pitching hips and perky shoulders that are not to be resisted. Her voice continues to be sometimes sweet and sometimes further from the pitch than Dixie is from Broadway. She is an exotic done in brass."

Alexander Woollcott in The Sun:

"In the reasonably high jinks at the Broadhurst there are two high spots. One of the high spots is named Florence Mills and the other is named Johnny Nit. It is our present intention to see all the shows in which these two engaging persons take part. Miss Mills, well known to the patrons of the Plantation before that rendezvous was touched by the great drought, is a flashing and beautiful woman who lights up like a Christmas tree when she dances and is quite as festive."

Heywood Broun in The World:

"The method of Florence Mills is like that of no one else. She does not precisely sing but she makes strange high noises which seem to fit in somehow with a rapid-fire sort of sculpture. Sometimes the intent is the creation of the grotesque and then it fades into lines of amazing beauty. Now I have seen grace."

Percy Hammond in The Herald-Tribune:

"Anything from an ozzy ballad to a jungle ditty is within the range of her animated method, and she can dance almost as well as some of the more talented members of her chorus. This suggests that she is a good dancer, for among the russet, cinnamon, sorrel and nut-brown maids who perform in 'From Dixie to Broadway' there are many ladies with competent feet. It was Miss Mills, however, who dominated the sable revels. She looked like a nimble microbe and she was equally infectious."

Alan Dale in The American:

"Miss Mills is an amusing little personette. She is tremendously serious and utterly self-possessed. She has no qualms. She sings birdily, she dances rhythmically, and she is intensely lively, and agile, and industrious. There are no 'airs' about Florence; there is no 'side' to this hard-working little star, and she knows her business. She was billed as 'the sensation of two continents' and we'll let it go at that, one continent at a time being about our measure."

The critic of the New York Times:

"On several occasions last night the new revue worked its audience up to a high pitch of excitement. There were times last night when emotional waves crossed and re-crossed the footlights. Miss Mills has style and verve, and a voice one with unexpected bell-like little

The critic of The Evening Post: "Florence Mills can sing and she is a born comic. The upper ranges of her small warbling voice delight us and personally. The evening was a startling sense of native grotesquerie and the art to make it through concealment."

Theatrical—1924. I.

Individual Troupes, etc.

SPRINGFIELD MASS. REPUB
SEPTEMBER 4, 1924

Charles S. Gilpin Heads Program at Broadway

New vaudeville acts will be seen, together with the photoplay feature, Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model," at the Broadway theater today, tomorrow and Saturday. Melodramatic "Nellie," whose adventures cultimate in her rescue on the tracks of the elevated railway in New York while an express train, with the pilot stricken, thunders toward her, is an amusing character. The vaudeville bill is headed by Charles S. Gilpin, a Negro actor, formerly star of "The Emperor Jones" and who was also seen in John Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln." He will offer songs and stories. He is said to be one of the most talented members of his race on the stage. Alexander Brothers and Evelyn offer ball bouncing, juggling and comedy; Irving and Elwood are seen in "A Bouquet of Songs." Songs and piano selections are included in the act. The most elaborate feature of the bill is "Sizzling Feet," described as a dance divertissement, with Russo, Ties and Russo and the Nardruff sisters.

WORLD
NOVEMBER 23, 1924

NEGROES' DREAM REALIZED AS RACE PLAYS BROADWAY

Goal Sought by Famous Colored Comedians of Other Days Captured by Florence Mills.

By Lester A. Walton

The long-cherished dream of Williams and Walker, Cole and Johnson and Ernest Hogan to see a colored musical comedy successfully playing in the very heart of Broadway is at last a reality, coming at a time when but one of these famous comedians—J. Rosamond Johnson—is alive to witness this evolutionary step. For years these Negro stars labored and sacrificed to gratify an ambition now being realized by Florence Mills, who is scoring a pronounced hit in "Dixie to Broadway" at the Broadhurst.

In the vain hope of producing a Negro show on the Rialto the mental and physical health of both George Walker and "Bob" Cole became seriously impaired. For the same reason Ernest Hogan fell a victim to tuberculosis from which he never recovered. After the death of his partner Bert Williams headed a colored company in "Lode of Koal," which tarried but a short time in Columbus Circle. Low both in spirit and finances, the inimitable Bert joined the Ziegfeld Follies winning additional fame and for the first time in his career receiving a salary commensurate with his worth as a box-office attraction. At his death he was the star of a company of which he was the only Negro.

Upsets Former Theories.

The impressive success of Florence Mills and her company shatters some deep-rooted theories heretofore existing relative to colored musical companies. "No colored musical show can be a financial and artistic success on Broadway," has been a saying for years and regarded as incontrovertible.

The line of argument advanced by the theatrical powers was that white amusement seekers would not patronize a colored show as a legitimate theatrical proposition but desired to regard Negro entertainment merely as a lure for slumming parties; that to create the proper atmosphere it was necessary to house a colored attraction in a theatre off Broadway on the fringe of the theatrical district.

That "art knows no color line" is substantiated by the conquest Miss Mills and her associates are making in a recognized Broadway house, and gives corroboration to the assertion often made by those who have said Broadway would take off its hat to any theatrical attraction that measured up to the high standards set with respect to class, cleanliness and merit.

Even after Miller and Lyles and Sissle and Blake had hung up an unprecedented record in "Shuffle Along" at what is now known as the 63d Street Music Hall, they later on found the forbidden precincts closed tight against them. Last season before Miller and Lyles could make their New York debut in "Runnin' Wild" their managers found it necessary to lease the Colonial Theatre, formerly a vaudeville house at Broadway and 63d Street. It was not until Miller and Lyles closed their metropolitan engagement that it was possible for Sissle and Blake to come to town with their new production, "The Chocolate Dandies," although repeated attempts were made to break through the proscribed theatrical deadline.

Surprise for Broadway.

It was, therefore, a piece of startling and unheard of news when word was first given out that the "Dixie to Broadway" Company had been booked by the Shuberts to open at the Broadhurst Theatre for an indefinite run—and at a most desirable period of the new theatrical season. Nevertheless, this invasion of Broadway did take place, and with gratifying results to the public, managers and actors.

For fifteen years or more colored musical shows have led a precarious existence. During the seasons of 1906-1907, 1907-1908 and 1908-1909, they were in the height of their popularity. Williams and Walker, Cole and Johnson and Ernest Hogan starred in companies appearing in the larger cities of the North, while the Smart Set with S. H. Dudley, and the Black Patti Troubadours toured the South and also played to Northern audiences.

Then came the movies which started the large colored musical shows on the tobaggan. One after another the houses of the Stair and Havlin Circuit changed its policy, finding it more financially productive to run pictures than the presentation of musical comedy and melodrama. Unable to obtain booking over the Klaw and Erlanger and Shubert Circuits, and with little or no consecutive dates without making big jumps, the colored attractions with Broadway aspirations were forced to disband.

At the time these theatrical organizations were in their zenith their nearest approach to reaching Broadway was by filling engagements at the Majestic Theatre, later named tre Globe, in Columbus Circle. At this large and well-appointed playhouse William and Walker enjoyed their greatest success, "Bandanna Land," in 1908, and had a few seasons previously made their premier in the spectacular production, "Abyssinia."

Williams Gave Up Hope.

The enforced retirement of Hogan, Walker and Cole and their subsequent death, were severe blows to the colored theatrical profession, for in their passing the stage lost three comedians of marked ability who possessed vision and fighting spirit. Bert Williams pluckily shouldered the responsibility of carrying on the good work, but upon finding the odds too great became a luminary of importance in white musical companies.

In the succeeding years promoters interested in the Negro in the realm of the footlights put out colored musical shows with Broadway as their objective, but without success. In 1918 Miller and Lyles, appearing under my management,, exerted every effort to find refuge in a theatre on the Gay White Way, but even the presence of Charles Dillingham, F. Ray Comstock, Irving Berlin and other Broadway celebrities at the Lafayette Theatre on opening night, and the kindly consideration they personally manifested, failed to bring about a change in the theatre address of the company from Harlem to Times Square. Similar futile endeavors to reach Broadway were also made y Negro comediants of lesser repu-tions.

Bent on reviving the popularity of the colored musical show, Miller and Lyles and Sissle and Blake organized the "Shuffle Along" company in the spring of 1921, with John Cort as manager. The attraction opened at the Howard Theatre, Washington. With the outlook none too right, E. C. Brown, a Negro banker of Philadelphia, and at the time President of the Quality Amusement Corporation which was operating theatres and organizing colored musical and dramatic companies, appeared in the role of a friend in need.

WHITE CARGO AND OTHER FREIGHT

By William Pickens for Associated Negro Press

This is a race-propaganda play;—one of those numerous plays of the present decade which assume superiority for the Nordic, or at least for the Causacian—and which seek to justify any social crime if commited by "whites" against "natives" or "niggers." There is a cool assumption in all of these plays and stories that being "white" among "inferiors" is like being human among swine: the principals and ideals that are supported by sanctions among the white people are not binding as between whites and others.

Pittsburgh American

"White Cargo" represents Englishmen in Africa as perfectly willing, and even glad, to consort with "nigger women," but as having fifty-seven varieties of fits at the mere idea of marrying these women. And, as usual the native woman, is represented as in hot pursuit of the "white gentlemen"—and the poor fellows just yield because they cannot evade or get rid of the women.

11-14-24

This is the obverse of "All God's Chillun," in which a black man is shown to be slavishly serving his white woman, who is a prostitute, although she is represented as behaving fairly well, considering, after she actually marries this black man. In fact, the poor thing is shown to have fallen as low as to marry a highly educated Negro only because she was hungry and naked and presumably because she could not find any even worthless men of her own race who would supply her with food and clothes.

All this is a lie, in the main. There are white gents in every part of the nation who are dogging the steps of perfectly worthless colored women, some of them being undesired by their colored male acquaintances. And on the other hand there are white women with wagon loads of money, who are paying for linen sheets, silk pajamas and idleness in Negro men, who are not particularly attractive to colored girls.

But there is one common factor in all these "plays" that shows the wonderful superiority of white people: that is, they are written by men.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
DECEMBER 9, 1924

IS NEGRO STAR UNIQUE PLAYER?

Johnny Hudgins, Fleetfooted Shuffin' Comedian, Is Stormy Petrel of Much Legislation.

FEATURE AT CLUB ALABAM

First Time in History That Colored Performer's Services Have Been Considered Extraordinary.

By ASHBY DEERING.

For the first time—the very first time, if you please — the courts of the State of New York are being asked to consider whether the services of a colored performer are unique, extraordinary and impossible of duplication on the stage.

The performer who will thus create the first precedent to apply to the colored race as to originality, spontaneity and unsurpassing cleverness of shuffling feet in the various forms of dancing in which so many excel is Johnny Hudgins. Mistah Hudgins was formerly a comedian with Sissle & Blake in "Chocolate Dandies" at the Colonial Theatre, and is now a featured "artist" at the Club Alabam, erstwhile Little Club.

Counsel for Mistah Hudgins are Kendler & Goldstein of 1540 Broadway. They have already won their case in the Supreme Court in injunction proceedings begun by B. C. Whitney, and yesterday they were served with notice of appeal to the Appellate Division, First Department.

The title of the case in the Supreme Court of New York County is Bertram C. Whitney, plaintiff, against Johnny Hudgins, Lee Shubert, Jacob J. Shubert, Winter Garden Company and Arthur Lyons, defendants.

Whitney is the producer of "Chocolate Dandies." Lyons is the personal manager of Hudgins. Nathan Burkan represents the plaintiff. In an affidavit submitted by Whitney last October in support of his application for an injunction the plaintiff says that on June 3, 1924 in Boston, Mass., an agreement in writing was signed by Whitney and Hudgins whereby the colored performer would engage himself to Whitney for the run of the Sissle & Blake show, then called "In Bamville" and later known as "Chocolate Dandies," as soon as Hudgins could obtain his release from his contract with Irons & Clamage. It was further agreed according to Whitney, that Whitney would pay for that release. The release was finally obtained and it was necessary, Whitney continues, to rewrite the show and build it around Hudgins.

The affidavit then declares: "Hudgins was the hit of the show. People who came to the performances discussed it with me and told me they enjoyed Hudgins's performance the best of all.

"My connection with theatrical business has extended over 30 years and I have had a wide and extensive experience therein. I have never seen a dancer who could do the original and comic steps that Hudgins does. He is funny, entertaining, original and in a class by himself. It would be impossible for me to replace him with any other colored actor."

The plaintiff further alleges that a few days prior to Sept. 16, 1924, Hudgins announced that he was going to leave the show; that he (Whitney) began investigation and found out that Hudgins had signed a contract with the Shuberts under which he was to receive double the salary he was getting from Whitney; "that by reason of the acts of Hudgins this production of 'Chocolate Dandies' is in danger of being ruined; that more than $85,000 has been spent in the preparation of the show and since Hudgins left the show there has been a loss in the box office receipts of more than $2,500 each week."

Therefore Whitney asked for an injunction "enjoining the defendant, Johnny Hudgins, from performing or rendering his services to any other person, firm or corporation as an actor, dancer or comedian in vaudeville, burlesque, musical comedy, musical revue, cabaret or other entertainment, or from performing in any theatre other than the plaintiff's."

The answering affidavit of Hudgins first admitted the Boston contract and further stated that on or about July 10, 1924, York, the manager of the show submitted another contract to Hudgins that Whitney wanted him to sign. Hudgins refused to sign the second contract for the alleged reason it was nor a run-of-the-play contract.

Hudgins also contended that for the weeks of July 19, July 27, August 2, August 9 and August 16 he was required to take a 25 per cent. cut in salary against his protest; that a notice was posted in Atlantic City stating the show was to close on Saturday night, August 16, and was to be called again for rehearsal on Monday, August 25, at the Colonial Theatre, New York City.

"That the plaintiff attempted in this manner to hold on to Hudgins's services and yet not pay him for that period."

He denies that he rendered any services to the Winter Garden Company of the Shuberts and asserts that since he left the plaintiff he has been playing in the Club Alabam Revue.

For an answer to the "unique and extraordinary" allegations of Whitney concerning the services of the colored performer, counsel for the defendant challenges Whitney to produce a single exhibit or specify a single instance in which Hudgins was featured. Hudgins states that his name was "never mentioned or emphasized in newspaper advertisements, electric lights, bill posters or programs, which are the recognized channels of publicity."

He says that the only names ever featured by all these means were the names of Sissle & Blake.

Judge Mitchel, of the Supreme Court, Special Term, Part I, rendered the following terse decision a few days ago, sustaining the contentions of counsel for the colored man:

"Motion is denied. Under the circumstances disclosed in the papers submitted on this motion, plaintiff is not entitled to an injunction pendete lite."

The immediate effect of a decision against Hudgins would have been to stop him from doing his double shuffle and other trick dances at the Club Alabam or from rendering any services for his manager, Arthur Lyons.

GILPIN'S RISE IS DUE TO EFFORT AND STUDY

Noted Actor Has Not Always Been A Child Of Good Fortune

NEW YORK, Nov. 8—In an interview this week Charles J. Gilpin, noted actor who won fame in the play by Eugene O'Neill, "The Emperor Jones," said that his "purpose in life has been not so much to make a success as an actor, and by so doing enrich my own pocketbook, as to show the people of this country that a colored man is capable of better things on the stage than mere singing, dancing and cheap buffoonry.

"I used to run away from home," he continued, "when I was a boy—I lived in Richmond, Va., and got on at cheap vaudeville houses as an amateur. My mother, who was a strict Christian, was much against the stage, so I had to run away to do it.

"Years after, when I served my time learning the printer's trade, I found myself in Philadelphia and out of a job because the other men in the shop would not work with me. From then on, I went at the theatrical business in earnest. I played anything and everything I could get. I played little parts in cheap vaudeville theaters, I trouped with jubilee singers, worked as a chorus man in burlesque shows and musical comedies—in fact, anything I could get.

"And I have not always had the best of things ever since I began to attract notice. I am not an idealist, but decidedly a materialist, and when the theater would not support me I worked at whatever I could find, and would do it again. Between engagements, when things have not been as I could have wished them, I have worked as Pullman porter. I ran an elevator in New York a few years ago. In fact, I was running an elevator when I was selected for the part which I played in 'Abraham Lincoln,' the Drinkwater play."

NEW YORK CITY HERALD
NOVEMBER 23, 1924

Watching the Colored Revue Dancers From "Back Stage"

Untrained as They Are, Every Dusky Member of the Chorus Believes She Can Do Florence Mills's "Stuff"

By Percy N. Stone

They answered the call of the wild—the wild jazz that titillates their souls as nothing else in the world can do. "From Dixie to Broadway" has coaxed the fast-moving, rollicking, darkly-tinted feet from every corner of the States.

This is not a Southern show. The pseudo-sentimental stuff about "Way down South" means nothing to them. Hardly a one knows more about the South than is written in the Jolsonesque "mammy" ditties.

But though the cast has nothing to do with the Mason-Dixon line, it is proof of the competency of the colored race in realms musical and terpsichorean. In that congregation are feet that can no more resist the strains of high-pressure scores than cheap umbrellas can resist rain. It goes right through them—and the fun is on.

Watching them "back stage" shows what havoc the orchestra raises with quiet and decorum. Whenever the doleful strains of a blue and minored air reaches the auditory centers of those colored folk their feet begin to move. It doesn't matter if it is their number or not. The wings are full of people waiting to go on, but they are dancing all the while.

Out in the orchestra it is hard to dissociate the fast-flinging feet from thoughts of barbarism and the jungles. The press agents have made much of the alleged introduction of African rites, or, at least, African antics, into Broadway's too unvaried, year-in-and-year-out melange. It is all an illusion. Africa is not only miles but generations away from these dancing folk. It is so far away that the physical evidences are almost lost on 90 per cent of the girls.

It isn't Africa any more than it is the South. It is America—jazzing, dancing America. Instead of the simplicity of a backward people there is the same hard sophistication that is bone and sinew of every revue. Not that that makes any difference in one's enjoyment of it. The fact is put in here only because of the misconception that has been fed the public. If the colored revue can out-sing and out-dance the white entertainments it should not be necessary for a Nordic pride to attempt justification by charging it against a barbarity so remote that a biological throw-back is impossible.

The truth is that the negroes, of varying degrees of racial purity, have taken the same steps that every revue dancer uses and done them in a manner of which each playgoer may be his own judge. If one wishes to trace contemporaneous music hall tunes back to a remote African influence, an entirely different proposition is offered. The contention here is only that these colored performers take the accepted manner of amusing what are misnamed tired business men and use it without

Theatrical—1924 II.

Individual Troupes, etc.,

primitive embellishment.

But how they use it when a warm audience faces them! All they need to become wastrels of strength and enthusiasm is applause. Without it they are likely to drop into a lethargic state in all respects similar to the thoroughly blase attitude of a majority of their bleached sisters. They need appreciation more than anything else. When they are by themselves they don't care, but when they are performing for Broadway they need encouragement to keep their spirits up. It is a sort of inferiority complex situation.

However, no matter how much they give the audience the persons in the orchestra lose a chance to appreciate much of the talent in the cast. By the time the sound waves created by the throats of the chocolate coryphees cross the footlights they have rolled together into one volume of music. In the wings it is different. There one hears the nearest voices above the rest—and some of them are extraordinary. A white girl possessing a voice similar to some of those in this show would be out of the chorus in a week. It is hard to realize that these are chorus voices, and harder still to become reconciled to the knowledge that, life being just what it is, they will probably never be anything more important, for their complexions are fixed.

While the audiences lose the full value of the voices, it has one advantage over those who are watching from the stage. This chorus is not the most beautiful in the world. It is in their appearance that the "picked-for-their-looks" girls equal things up with the "Dixie to Broadway" bevy. The latter sing far better and dance with greater delight and abandon, but the former seldom offend the eye, no matter what the range.

Yet their looks are not so important, for when they get under way it is grace that counts, and grace they have in generous measure. Nor is it the grace that is pounded into the spiritless child of perfect features who dances only when she has to, and then does it with a "one-two-three-four" metronomical precision. There is rapture in the dancing of these colored girls—a love for the thing they are doing.

The best way to prove this true is to study the records of the many performers. They are not trained. Dancing with them is instinctive and irresistible. Their feet have been disciplined to move in unison with the rest, but that is all. Behind that group similarity lies nothing but vagrant feet and legs that can't keep still when the leader swings his baton.

This lack of training would not be surprising if the girls danced as a majority of Broadway girls dance. The mystery with the others always has been the inability to profit from the instruction they get. But here is the reverse. Without coaching, these girls have astounded the reviewers with their alacrity, their industry and their grace.

There was one male dancer, much darker than most of the cast, who tried to explain it.

"Why, man, they just dance, that's all. Trainin'? They never had trainin'. They been doing this since they was so high, just 'cause they can't help themselves."

The back-stage picture is evidence of this. It makes no difference who is performing, the chorus girls waiting their turn to go on cannot keep still. Their feet are jigging or their legs are waving to the tempo from the pit. They laugh at their own efforts when things don't go right, but they keep right on in pursuit of some difficult step until they master it.

There was some curiosity as to what girl would take the place of Florence Mills in case of accident. The dusky commentator upon the girls' lack of training volunteered the information.

"There would be a mob scene," he said. "Any girl here could do her stuff—maybe not so good, but she could do it. There ain't a one as couldn't. No, sir. They're all ready."

They can't resist the music; that's why they could step in. They hum it and dance it and carry it with them always.

But it isn't African, and it isn't the Suwanee shore. It's 100 per cent American revue dancing done by girls from every part of the country who are only interpreting in American fashion their love for music.

The Prompt Book

By STARK YOUNG.

NOW that the race discussions have quieted down and the arguments over giving a play that shows a white woman married to a negro have exhausted the subject, it will be a good thing to talk once more of Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as art.

For the sting of realistic detail "All God's Chillun Got Wings" cannot compare with the first act of "Anna Christie" and does not try in that method to compete with it. It is not so good as "The Emperor Jones" for sheer theatricality and line. It has not the line and pattern of "The Hairy Ape." Nor has it the fable of "The Hairy Ape," which has a story that is in itself swiftly and unforgetably the whole play. As achievement "All God's Chillun Got Wings" does not surpass Eugene O'Neill's other work, but in depth of motive and spirit it is an advance.

The theme of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" is love and not primarily a race problem. It is love with enormous impediments to its progress and fulfillment, impediments of prejudice, race, shame, madness, things as deep as birth and death and life itself. In the thinking out to its concluding ideas this play seems to me profound and impressive. In the actual scenes less so, especially the first half; and in the production or performance even less.

The opening scenes, well on past the first intermission, dragged. I kept thinking that the intention was good, was right, but that somehow it did not come off. For one thing, the tempo was relaxed and slow. The lines, the words, seemed often to mean what was true to the moment but to remain uninspired. As entertainment it was not very much alive. And yet it was impressive somewhere back in one's head by reason of its direction and intensity.

Many people, to judge by the things they say in the lobby, and have said elsewhere, take such a production as that given at the Greenwich Village Theatre to "All God's Chillun Got Wings" as doing its little best to emulate the regular doings of Broadway. With varying degrees of patience various persons look on such a style of production, such simplification and such frank convention or arrangement, as amateurish. This is wrong. But such people arrive at such conclusions through a common impression abroad in the theatre that the art of the theatre is always aiming at realism, and if not realism at elaborations on the real. They assume that the haven of the theatrical artist is to copy ordinary nature, exactly as they assume that Botticelli or El Greco when they paint men would gladly make their pictures as much like our anatomy as possible. As for this production at the Greenwich Village Theatre, these people say to themselves that if the scenes were given in a good, bang-up, familiar professional style we should see them go off differently enough.

The truth, however, is that the idea, at least, behind the production of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" is plainly conscious of its design and method. The acting of James Martin as Mickey, it is true, and of Frank Wilson as Joe, and, alas! of Dora Cole as Hattie, is amateur in the sorriest sense, all the worse as art, perhaps, for being congenitally so similar to the characters portrayed. The method used by Mary Blair is no more amateurish, however, than the lighting of the scene is amateurish as compared with the usual realistic lighting. The fact is that a bang-up and shining professional production of these O'Neill scenes would ruin them wholly. They would be thrown out of joint, made hollow and false and crude.

What has to be said, then, is not that these scenes as now done are highly successful, but that Eugene O'Neill has created a good many scenes in recent years that are out of style for the general run of acting in our theatre. It is not that these scenes are too fine or too excellent or emotionally too difficult. It is that they attempt a method that has no parallel in the kinds of acting we employ. Take the wedding scene in "All God's Chillun Got Wings." We hear a song behind the closed door. Then on either side of the steps the crowd gathers, the whites on one side, the blacks on the other, the couple appear, the whites are nearest the man, the blacks nearest the white woman who is the bride. The two make their way in anguish down the steps. Nobody has much to say except the bridegroom, who has a long, tortured monologue. All this is good theatrical invention; it has a pattern, a meaning. But the whole scene went more or less flat. Some sort of marking was needed in the acting, some stylization in the same genre as the writing. A matter of acting and production this is, but the writing itself may also be to blame. The dramatist will either have to carry these scenes further toward an expressionistic or frankly symbolistic or stylized form, or let them rest in a more tangible realism; either carry the method further or less far than he has done. Whatever the method, it should be single and unescapable.

Throughout "All God's Chillun Got Wings" a great part of the theatrical stir and intensity must depend on the acting of the two leading rôles, the white woman and the negro man. In Paul Robeson's case, who took the man's part, we have a singular instance of a small talent and a large comprehension of the character and situation. Paul Robeson gave the impression of understanding the play, its last meanings, its tragic thrust, its fatality, lyricism and almost mystical themes and insights. He achieved thus a certain pathos of implications. A certain exotic quality came from the racial difference in voice and personality. But he showed little talent. As an actor he was monotonously tense and bulky. The phrase and emphasis of his speeches seemed to come from far back in a thinking head, but to have no connection with the tone or rhythm employed. He had almost no pantomime. A simple example was the moments when he sat at the table to study. In the art of acting this kind of thing is one of the simplest tests of talent. A concentration of line, a flow, a unity of rhythm appears that is the very life of the act portrayed. Mr. Robeson sat working hard as usual, tensely, blinking his eyes, doing something every moment, but creating nothing. At the very last of the play, where the directing also was remarkable, he was much better; the combined force of his own beautiful emotion and the power of the theme carried the scene to a great conclusion.

Mary Blair gave the same indications of knowing what her part was about and what the struggle and surge of the play might mean. Her work was unequal, but often good, especially where the scene was without words or driven to violent feeling. She is a young actress who has not yet learned how to hold her work to a continuous and unified pressure and a more or less memorized and even execution. But she has talent. She has an extraordinary tension and strange nervous power that can in time establish her in more than one kind of rôle in our theatre.

"All God's Chillun Got Wings," so far as total accomplishment goes, seems to me incomplete but reasonably successful. The thing that remains in the mind from this play and that makes it memorable is the greatness of its direction. The essential theme of this drama aims at the profundity of the great myth, dark with a mystery almost biological, beautiful with passionate desire for range and scope. The use of the Congo mask as symbolizing for the woman the negro race, the horror, the hate, is fine theatrical imagination. And most of all we have the themes at the conclusion of the play for the love situation between this black man and his white wife, where the woman wishes him to fail in his law examinations and so remain inferior, and to love her as his child, and to be only Uncle Jim who has been with us for years, and where the negro man sinks on his knees before God. These are tremendous spiritual and dramatic motivations, greatly imagined, moving and powerful with life.

Negro Contributions Support Big Boast In Theatrical World; Race Artists, Musical Comedy Kings

NEW YORK, Aug. 13—A.N.P.—Messrs. Miller and Lyles, of the "Runnin' Wild" company recently offered a splendid prize to the member of the organization who would write the best essay, not to exceed 500 words on the subject: "How the Negro has helped the Theatrical world." The prize was won by Miss Gessie Allison, of New York, a featured member of the chorus, and said to be one of the most beautiful young women in the United States. Miss Allison put her thoughts into 391 words, and has demonstrated that beauty and brains can go hand in hand. The prize essay, which is interesting to the general public say:

"Candidly speaking, I might say that the theatrical world of today would have little or nothing to boast of were it not for the Negro and his contributions. In spite of much discrimination and many odds, the race has created and established a brand of entertainment which over half the white performers are endeavoring to imitate in some manner. Diligent efforts on the part of aspiring competitors are being made every day, to sing, dance, talk, act and to execute jazz more like the Negro; but there are so few who truly succeed in their attempts to imitate, that one might venture to conclude that the Negro is yet unrivaled. .

"Consider for a brief moment some of the Broadway celebrities, such as Belle Baker, Sophie Tucker, Nora Bayes, Ann Pennington, Eddie Cantor and Al Jolson. Each of these is a box office attraction, and each of these specialize in some type of jazz offering for the approval of the public. In view of this fact, the theatrical world owes much of its progress to the Negro for the discovery of jazz.

"It was also the Negro who originated the universally known blues songs, and there are none who can render them most effectively. The previous statement is a little broad, but when one hears Ethel Waters, Mamie Smiht and Alberta Hunter sing 'em, it will prove a difficult matter to dispute the truth of it.

"In the line of drama they have much creditable work by Ira Aldridge, Charles S. Gilpin and Paul Robeson. Aside from their meritorious offerings of various forms of jazz, they have helped equally as much in their contributions in comedy. Great credit is due the work of late Negro performers such as Ernest Hogan, Cole of Cole and Johnson, Bert Williams, Walker and Marie Machree.

"The greatest contribution, however, in all history, of the Negro is that of the world's most famous colored producers and comedians—Miller and Lyles, who originated the best of all colored shows in 'Shuffle Along" and Runnin' Wild." As a team they reign supreme as the kings of musical comedy. The white performers as well as the Negro race should feel proud and appreciate the achievements of this team, in view of the fact, that they have originated many good things for them to imitate."

WOMAN OWNS SHOW

Race Woman Makes Good In Unusual Business Field

By J. A. Jackson

Our women are forging ahead in all lines. There is little in the way of business or the professions that they have not mastered. The following letter tells its own story: It was addressed to J. A. Jackson of the Billboard, thru whose courtesy it is released for its race value.

Dear Sir:

Undoubtedly you will be surprised to receive this letter from an unknown correspondent. Altho I have never had the pleasure of meeting you personal, I have been a faithful reader and admirer of your writings and of the Billboard.

I have often wanted to send in a few lines, but being unacquainted have hesitated to do so until I have convinced myself that I am being unfair to other readers, as well as to myself. Perhaps it will encourage other members of the profession to know what we are doing. If what I have to say does not appeal to you in that manner scrap it, and say no more about it.

This is my fifth year as the owner and producer of Ada Myers Troubadors, and my ninth year of show world experience. I saw that there was an opportunity for better shows with the carnivals. The famous Russell Brothers gave me a chance to demonstrate the kind of a show I thought the public would like; and I succeeded.

Last year I was with the Royal American shows. We travelled thru territory where they said a minstrel show could not live, and we made them like it. Why? Our girls can really sing, dance and talk. Our costumes are neat and clean and our comedians do not resort to smut or suggestiveness to attract attention to their presence upon the stage.

We are presenting a musical revue, changing the program every night on the Brundage shows. Mr S. W. Brundage. the owner saw our show last season and contracted us for the current season on the spot.

He furnished us with a state room car equipped with a kitchen, and an entirely new outfit. The tent is 40 by 30, and the wagon front has the name "Ada J. Myers Troubadors" artistically painted across the front in a varja-colored design. Our front drop is monogrammed "A. J. M."

Tho we have been turning patrons away from the door we have earned and paid salaries, and kept our kitchen filled with good substantial food, and kept a cook who knows just how to prepare it.

We should like to have you visit our show. We opened with a bevy of girls each of whom is able to do a specialty. They are Mamie Burns, Elnora Gray, Louis Washington, Eva Miller, Amelia Simms, Lola Wells, Maudelle James and Sadie Eastman. "Jelly Beans" Mosby and Fred Lindsay are the comedians. Alvin Tinsley is the straight man. Leroy Everette plays the drums and Babe Ambrose the piano.

I sell my own tickets.

Now that I have introduced the troubadors, may I say that we have a lot of pleasure touring the country on Sundays and visiting shows that are playing nearby towns. I own a seven passenger Studebaker and take a number of the girls with me every Sunday. Come visit with the woman owned show and we shall be glad to have you. Professionally yours,

ADA J. MYERS.

Comment:—No waste baskets or scrap piles for as interesting a letter as that. It would be cheating our readers. Besides publishing it for the benefit of professionals, we have relayed the story to the Associated Negro Press so that the members of the National Negro Business League, now meeting in Chicago, and the National Federation of Women's Clubs, whose sessions have just closed may have the enterprising woman's achievements brought to their attention.

"Chocolate Dandies" on Broadway Soon

Messrs. Sissle and Blake in Their New Show Will Open at Colonial Theatre Labor Day.

New York will greet with a whoop the announcement of the coming of "The Chocolate Dandies" to the Colonial Theatre on Labor Day, September 7. This is the latest big show by Messrs. Sissle and Blake and it has been causing lots of talk in little old Gatham, talk induced by the wonderful manner in which the boys put over the works in the cities where they have been appearing.

We understand that there are 125 people in this big show, and costumes, settings, music, etc., are right up to the minute. The vehicle should get off to a big start on Broadway, as it has been on the road for some time and the boys have had enough time to whip it into shape for their appearance. Johnny Hudgins and Lew Payton are holding down prominent parts in the show.